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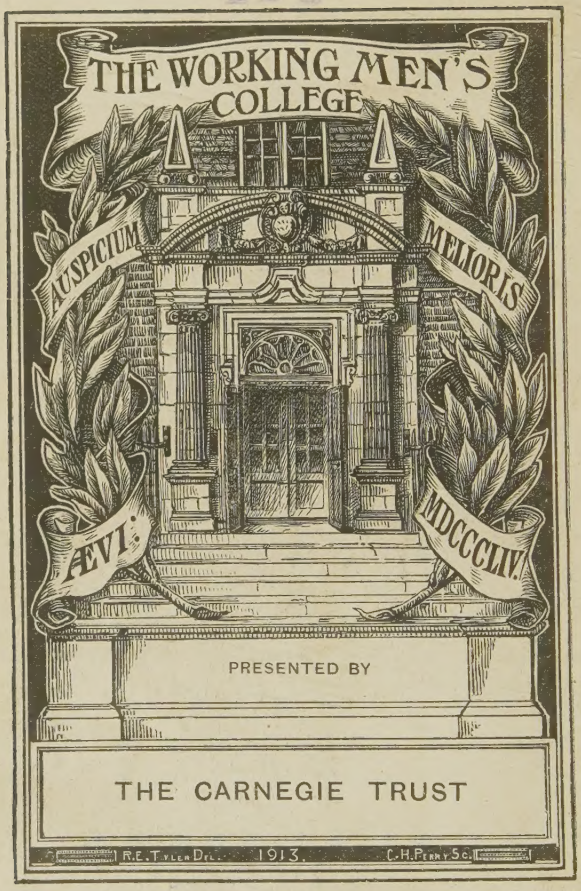
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GERMANY

BY G. P. GOOCH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE RIGHT HON. H. A. L. FISHER, M.P.

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INTRODUCTION

To minds of a certain calibre and training this book on Germany, written by one of our most distinguished living historians, will seem surprisingly dispassionate. Certainly we are here a thousand miles removed from the heat and dust of the conflict. What can honestly be said for the Germans and their policies during the last half-century is set down in this volume with a measure of sympathy and understanding which probably only an inhabitant of our cool, self-critical, and judicial island could achieve within so short a distance of the fiery ordeal. I do not profess that my estimate of the great transactions recorded in the central part of this volume agrees in every particular with that of Mr. Gooch. There are in history certain imponderable and impalpable things which are felt in the personal intercourse of statesmen, but leave only a faint and inadequate trace upon paper. One of these is behaviour. Imperial Germany in the hour of her pride and power was unfortunate in her behaviour. She was arrogant when she should have been restrained, capricious when she should have been steady, and if she were in truth anxious to keep the peace, nevertheless behaved as a Power designing war. One great condemnation of her statesmanship is that it created in the minds of the Liberal and peace-loving Cabinet of Great Britain the strong impression of a German peril.

In this island two things were generally overlooked by those who were not closely concerned with the study of foreign politics. The first was the genuine and widespread fear of Russia which prevailed among the German people; the second, the lively apprehension of

Vienna in face of the disruptive movement of the Slavonic races within and without the Austrian Empire. The dangerously high temperature which Colonel House observed in Berlin in May 1914, four weeks before the Archduke's murder, is partly to be attributed to these causes and partly to the rising impatience of the military caste and to its growing ascendency in the counsels of the Empire.

That Germany had good reason to fear Russia is as true as it is damaging to the reputation of her politicians, who at one time might have had the Russian alliance and at another a solid British understanding, and with incredible blindness rejected both. In wartime the political direction of the country was equally at fault, and next to her original invasion of Belgium, it is difficult to decide which of her grand errors was the more expensive—her refusal clearly to intimate to Europe in 1916 a willingness to evacuate without guarantees every yard of Belgian soil, her adoption of the unrestricted submarine campaign, or the senseless and terrible devastations wrought by the orders of the General Staff during the retreat of the German armies to the Rhine. For these and other blemishes she has paid a heavy price.

Mr. Gooch has traced with a masterly hand the intellectual and moral forces which are now working in the defeated State. He has shown the industry, the courage, the steady impulse to self-improvement which persist, despite the darkest discouragement, in the soul of this remarkable people. He has enabled us to realise by how narrow a margin of public confidence the

Republic survives, and how easy it would be for the Allies, should they fail in a due measure of consideration for the real difficulties in which Germany is placed, so to swell the forces of monarchical and nationalist sentiment as to sweep away the Weimar Constitution and all that has been erected on its foundations. Were such a situation to be created the future of Central Europe would be dark indeed.

H. A. L. Fisher.

March 1925.

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GERMANY

CHAPTER I

BEFORE BISMARCK

Of all the leading peoples of Europe the Germans were the last to win their political unity.[1] Long after France and England, Russia and Spain, had built up strong centralised states, Germany remained a geographical expression, a tempting prey to foreign invaders and civil war. In the Middle Ages she enjoyed some brilliant, though fleeting, experiences of power and glory; but the sprawling realms of the Carolingians and the Hohenstaufen offered no effective substitute for a vigorous national monarchy, and with the rise of the Hapsburgs the political hegemony of Central Europe passed to a dynasty whose rule extended far beyond the frontiers of German blood and speech. A fresh element of discord entered with the Reformation, which, after a century of devastating strife, sundered the Protestant north from the Catholic south. Large portions of the distracted country were reduced to a desert by the Thirty Years' War; and though the armed conflict of faith ended with the Treaty of Westphalia, the new Germany which emerged from its fires was a lifeless mosaic of secular and ecclesiastical principalities, Free Cities, and Imperial Knights, possessing neither material nor spiritual unity.

The Holy Roman Empire lingered on, but was afflicted with creeping paralysis. In what respect, inquired the mocking voice of Voltaire, was it holy, or Roman, or an empire? "The Holy Roman Empire, how does it hold together?" shouted Goethe's revellers in Auerbach's *Keller*. No Curtius, observed Justus Möser, would leap into the abyss for the preservation

[1] See Brandenburg, *Die Reichsgründung*, vol. 1; A. W. Ward, *Germany*, vols. 1 and 2; Treitschke, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*; Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*; Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*.

of the Imperial system. The political framework of Central Europe, with the Emperor at Vienna, the Diet at Regensburg, the Supreme Court at Wetzlar, and the ten Circles—*imperia in imperio*—was the consecration of anarchy. The country was racked by an incurable particularism. Publicists lamented the anæmia of the Fatherland, but not one of them could suggest a remedy. The armies of Louis XIV and Louis XV ranged almost at will over German territory, and French gold played havoc with the independence of the Rhineland. "In my childhood," wrote Wieland, "I was told a great deal about duties; but there was so little about the duty of a German patriot that I cannot remember ever hearing the word German used with honour. There are Saxon, Bavarian, Frankfurt patriots; but German patriots, where are they?" Well might Karl Friedrich Möser exclaim in the bitterness of his heart that the Germans were a great but despised people.

While the rotting machinery of the Holy Roman Empire crumbled into dust, the real political life of the German people was to be found in its more progressive units. Since the Peace of Westphalia, which accorded to them the right of making treaties with foreign Powers, the States were sovereign in all but name, and one of them climbed rapidly to a position whence it boldly challenged the overlordship of the Imperial house. The long reign of the Great Elector laid the foundations of the autocracy on which the Hohenzollerns were to rear one of the strongest political edifices of the modern world. His son, Frederick I, placed the crown of Prussia upon his head, and his grandson, Frederick William I, created a bureaucracy which surpassed in efficiency that of every other European state. Inheriting a docile people, a well-trained army, and an overflowing treasury, Frederick the Great seized Silesia on his accession, and held it throughout two prolonged struggles against the combined efforts of half Europe. In a well-known passage

in his *Autobiography*, Goethe records how the victories of the great king awoke Germany from her slumbers, and provided an inspiring theme for poets in every part of the country. Moreover, the eyes of the world were turned not only to the victor of Rossbach and Leuthen, but to the exponent of a new theory of government. The contrast between the laborious simplicity of Potsdam and the dissolute idleness of Versailles, and its German imitators, enhanced the prestige of the Hohenzollerns. By proclaiming himself "the first servant of the State," he overthrew divine right and proprietary monarchy and substituted the doctrine of service. For forty-six years he laboured, without haste and without rest, as no crowned head had laboured before him; and at his death in 1786 he left Prussia a factor to be reckoned with not only on the stage of German politics, but in the larger life of the Continent.

The model of enlightened autocracy set by Frederick the Great was copied by Ferdinand of Brunswick, Karl Friedrich of Baden, Karl August of Weimar, and other petty potentates; but reformers were in the minority, and a sterile inertia brooded over the larger part of Germany. Constitutional liberty was unknown, and administrative efficiency was the exception. Most German princes of the eighteenth century entered on their inheritance in the spirit of Leo X, who, on hearing of his election, blandly observed, "God has given us the Papacy, let us enjoy it." Nowhere in Europe was absolutism more repulsive than in the stuffy duodecimo Courts, where mistresses ruled supreme, where venality placed the adventurer in office, where reckless ostentation stood out in glaring contrast to the poverty of the people. "The peasant," wrote a satirist grimly, "is like a sack of meal. When emptied there is still some dust in it—it only needs to be beaten." The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel and the Margrave of Bayreuth increased their slender revenues by selling their subjects to George III as mercenaries for the

American War. The insane passion for hunting wrought havoc among the crops of the peasantry, and the building of costly palaces ate up the resources of the State. Despots like Karl Eugen of Württemberg and Karl Theodor of Bavaria were the bane of their unhappy subjects. The rule of the Ecclesiastical Electors of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne, which gave the Rhine the name of Parsons' Lane, though seldom tyrannical, was enervating and obscurantist. The Free Cities had for the most part sunk into corrupt oligarchies ; and the Imperial Knights, scattered by hundreds over the south and west of Germany, ruled without let or hindrance over the tiny territory which they surveyed from their castle windows. The German house was blocked with mediæval lumber, and a purifying hurricane was needed to sweep through its dark corridors.

Though political life was thus backward and anæmic, an intellectual awakening held out the promise of better days. Wolff and Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn and Nicolai, the leaders of the *Aufklärung*—a name derived from the frontispiece of one of Wolff's books, depicting the sun breaking through clouds—exhorted their countrymen to discard superstition and use their reason without fear. The new interest in the things of the mind was stimulated by a crop of journals devoted to literature and philosophy, society and art. During the generation of peace which followed the Seven Years' War, Germany learned to read and began to ask questions. Publicists like Moser, and journalists like Schlözer and Schubart, boldly denounced the abuses of princely rule, and the Illuminati proclaimed the gospel of perfectibility. The writings of Rousseau took the German bourgeoisie by storm, and the triumph of the American colonies was hailed as a warning to rulers that there were limits to obedience. The youthful dramas of Schiller nourished the spirit of revolt, and *Love and Intrigue* laid bare the festering sores of German politics with unflinching hand.

Though the lethargy which had weighed on the country since the Thirty Years' War was passing rapidly away, and the fragility of existing institutions was generally recognised, we find few indications of national sentiment. There was little to praise in most of the States, and men of liberal views, excluded from power and responsibility, felt themselves in closer association with reformers in other lands than with the mass of their own countrymen. Love of Fatherland, observed Lessing, was a heroic failing from which he was glad to be free. "I write as a citizen of the world, who serves no prince," echoed Schiller. "If we find a place where we can rest with our belongings, a field to support us, a house to shelter us, have we not a Fatherland?" wrote Goethe, the unblushing cosmopolitan; "*ubi bene, ibi patria.*" German nationalism, argued Nicolai, was a political monstrosity. Humanity was the religion of the eighteenth century, and Masons and Illuminati dreamed of a grand association of men, regardless of differences in class, creed, or race, co-operating in the higher work of the world.

The intellectual ferment combined with the spread of political discontent to secure an enthusiastic welcome for the opening scenes of the French Revolution. The Declaration of the Rights of Man put into words the aspirations of the masses, and gave to the humble and disinherited a new sense of human dignity. When France in trumpet-tones decreed the downfall of feudalism and the equality of burdens, generous hearts all over Europe were thrilled by the warmth and glory of sunrise. Johannes Müller, the historian of Switzerland's struggles for freedom, pronounced the destruction of the Bastille the happiest event since the birth of Christ. Herder proclaimed the Revolution the most important movement in the life of mankind since the Reformation, and welcomed it as a no less decisive advance towards human freedom. "You cannot be more convinced than myself," wrote Wieland in an open letter to the French reformers, "that your

nation was wrong to bear such misgovernment so long." "I should regard the shipwreck of this movement," cried Gentz, "as one of the greatest disasters that ever befell mankind." In the crowded salons of Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin the *élite* of Berlin applauded the moving drama. The veteran Klopstock poured forth odes to Liberty, Kant and Herder pronounced the benediction of German philosophy; and university students planted trees of Liberty. Even Goethe, who detested reform from below, recognised that the cataclysm was the Nemesis of princely neglect. Moreover the arrogance and extravagance of the *Emigrés* in the Rhineland seemed to afford ocular demonstration of the necessity of the Revolution.

With few exceptions Germany's intellectual spokesmen welcomed the downfall of absolutism as a blessing for France and an omen of German liberty; but the rapid change in the character of the movement was followed by a revulsion on the part of the spectators, and men like Klopstock, who had led the applause, now hurled their thunderbolts against the savages on the Seine. After the outbreak of war, the September massacres, and the execution of the King, few voices were raised on behalf of French principles. Yet the impression produced by the events of 1789 was never effaced, for subjects had learned to hope and rulers to fear. Moreover the failure of Brunswick's invasion showed that the Revolution could not be suppressed by foreign arms. On the evening after the battle of Valmy, Goethe, who had accompanied Karl August of Weimar to the front, was asked what he thought of the situation. "Here and to-day commences a new epoch of world-history," he replied, "and you can boast that you were present at its birth." The prophecy was correct, for the levies of revolutionary France swept forward to the Rhine, submerging the ecclesiastical electorates, the petty principalities, and the Free Cities in their advance. Feudalism disappeared as at the touch of a conjurer's wand; and though the invaders were

tyrannical and rapacious, the abuses of centuries were swept away, and the stage was cleared for institutions suited to the needs of the modern world.

The combined effects of the ideas of 1789 and of the Great War produced two results in Germany of incalculable significance, the one of a negative, the other of a positive character. The first was the destruction of the political framework of the country, which was too worm-eaten for repair, and which blocked the path to the erection of a more suitable edifice. The military weakness exhibited by the Empire, the withdrawal of Prussia and the North at the height of the struggle, and the submergence of the ecclesiastical electorates by French arms left no doubt that the old firm was in liquidation. When the left bank of the Rhine was annexed to France in 1797, Görres wrote his celebrated obituary on the Holy Roman Empire. The princes whose interests were affected sought compensation for their losses on the right bank. By the Recess of 1803 the three ecclesiastical electorates and all the other ecclesiastical principalities were swept away ; the Free Cities, with the exception of six, disappeared, and the old organisation of the Circles was scrapped. The Princes' Revolution left the historic structure little more than a ruin, and it was evident that the sands were running out. A year later, when Napoleon crowned himself in Notre Dame, the Hapsburg monarch assumed the title of Emperor of Austria, and in 1806, the year after Austerlitz, the curtain was rung down on a thousand years of German history. The Holy Roman Empire, with the Emperor, the Electors, the Diet, the Court of Appeal, the Ecclesiastical Princes, the Imperial Knights, and the Free Cities had collapsed like a soap-bubble at the prick of Napoleon's spear. Bavaria, Württemberg, and Saxony blossomed into monarchies, and the Confederation of the Rhine fed out of its master's hand.

The second, or positive, result of the Wars of the Revolution was the renaissance of Prussia. After three

years of ineffective participation Frederick William II had withdrawn from the struggle in 1795 ; and when his son, Frederick William III, re-entered the fray in 1806 he fought without the assistance of Austria. The thrilling drama which opened at Jena and closed at Tilsit halved the possessions of Prussia but doubled her moral strength. The reforms of Stein and Hardenberg were rendered possible by the blows of Thor's hammer, and even the sluggish brain of the King realised that " material losses must be made good on the spiritual plane." The Frederician system of autocracy required a Frederick to work it, and Jena buried it too deep for resurrection. Stein's ministry was cut short before he had time to carry out more than a part of his programme ; but the emancipation of the peasants and the grant of municipal self-government stand out as monuments of his brief rule. The conservative minister was never the slave of French models, and he detested the theoretical approach to the problems of State; but the triumphs of Republican and Imperial France sharpened his perception that the latent strength of the nation must be evoked and employed. Hardenberg took office in 1810 with the same conviction that a new era had dawned. " Your Majesty, we must do from above what the French have done from below." He was as good as his word. He continued the creation of a free peasantry and carried forward the reform of the central and local administration ; and it was not his fault that Prussia had to wait for a constitution till 1848.

The years which followed the catastrophe of Jena were a time not only of suffering but of hope. The achievements of Stein and Hardenberg were only the most conspicuous embodiments of the new spirit of reform. The appointment of Wilhelm von Humboldt as Minister of Education was an event in European history ; and the greatest of his creations, the University of Berlin, quickly became the chief seat of learning and research in the world. Of greater immediate

importance were Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation*, delivered in Berlin in the winter of 1807–8 within earshot of the French garrison and at the peril of his life. The downfall of Prussia completed the conversion of the most eloquent of German philosophers from radical cosmopolitanism to militant nationalism. The title of his course was a programme in itself, and the patriotic note is sounded in the opening discourse. "I speak as a German to Germans, brushing aside all the differences which unhappy events have created during centuries in the single nation. These lectures, delivered first to you, are meant for the whole nation. They are intended to kindle a patriotic flame." He no longer, as in his earlier writings, paints his princes black and their subjects white. All, he cried, were responsible for the great collapse, and all must co-operate in the task of reconstruction. The most crying need was education. A national State was required, and the path to it lay through a schooling in patriotic sentiment and ethical resolve. Fichte was the most forcible lay-preacher of his age, and no writer strove so manfully to transform Germany into a virile political nation.

The barometer rose steadily. The inspired songs of Arndt and Körner gave utterance to the passionate determination of youth to break the yoke of Napoleon, and the Gymnastic Societies of Father Jahn prepared their bodies no less than their hearts for the coming strife. The older men shook their heads at such audacity. "You may rattle your chains," declared Goethe, "but he is too strong for you." The Emperor, indeed, bestrode Europe like a colossus, and led tens of thousands of his German vassals to their death on Russian snowfields. Moreover the sentiments of Prussia were not generally shared by southern Germany, whose rulers owed to him their crowns and their frontiers. Thus Prussia came to represent the hope of German patriots; and although her prosaic King was the last man to lead a crusade, he possessed

in Scharnhorst a military adviser with the ability and foresight to prepare for the inevitable encounter. The professional long-service army of Frederick the Great had perished in the Jena campaign, and the conception of a national army, borrowed from France and based on universal service, took shape in his brain. Napoleon limited the Prussian forces to 42,000 ; but by passing the youth of the country through the ranks a large reserve of trained soldiers was accumulated. When the retreat from Moscow broke the spell of the Emperor's invincibility, Prussia was a different country. The era of dynastic wars was over, and the people, inspired by a faith and hope which they had never known before, dragged their ruler into the fray. Russia, Austria, and Prussia for the first time combined to overthrow their common enemy, and the battle of Leipzig crowned the efforts of those who had steeled the heart and nerves of Germany for the deadly grapple. Scharnhorst perished in the struggle, but his work was carried on by Boyen, who, in September 1814, persuaded the King to ordain the permanence of compulsory service. The grateful King promised his people a Constitution, and the Waterloo campaign was fought in the conviction that sacrifice and suffering would be rewarded by the boon of internal no less than external liberty.

The French had been chased out of Germany, but the larger part of the country retained an indelible imprint of the occupation. The political unification of the nation was deferred for a couple of generations ; but the signal for its deliverance from the thraldom of mediæval institutions and antiquated ideas was sounded by the tocsin which rang out in 1789. Georg Forster, the most eminent of the German victims of the Revolution, had expressed the wish that his country should warm itself at the flame that had been kindled in France without being burned. His aspiration was destined in large measure to be fulfilled. While in England the reform movement was thrown back forty years, in Germany it was accelerated and strengthened

by the broom of the war-god. If Saxony and Mecklenburg remained unaffected by the flowing tide, and the old governments of Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel on their return restored most of the old abuses, the Rhineland and the South, in no less degree than Prussia, learned at least some of the secrets of enduring advance. The Left Bank emerged from its twenty years of French rule purged of the feudal incubus, relieved of the sway of the crozier, and in the enjoyment of equality before the law. Bavaria was transformed from the most backward into one of the most advanced of German States by the iron hand of Montgelas, who, with the approval of Max Joseph, the last Elector and first King, abolished serfdom, thinned the monasteries, freed education from clerical control, and introduced a modern system of law. A similar task was performed with ruthless decision by Frederick, the last duke and first King of Württemberg. The transition from the old world to the new was less abrupt in Baden, whose territory Karl Friedrich's reign of seventy years had increased tenfold, and which he left one of the most prosperous and civilised of German States. The titanic struggle with France generated hopes of political liberty which were destined to bitter disappointment ; but the historian, looking back from the vantage-ground of the twentieth century, discerns that few peoples advanced so far in so short a time as the Germans between 1789 and 1815.

The disappearance of the Holy Roman Empire and the collapse of the Federation of the Rhine left a vacuum which it was the duty of the Congress of Vienna to fill. The main feature of the political map as it emerged from the struggle of twenty years was the diminution in the number of its units from nearly 1800 to 39, and a corresponding increase in their size. Strengthened by the larger half of the Rhineland and the smaller half of Saxony, Prussia now extended from Memel to Aachen, and dominated the North ; Bavaria, Württemberg, and Baden divided the South ; and a third group was formed by the smaller States of the

Centre. Here were the elements of a compact and homogeneous federation in substitution for the vast and amorphous Empire which had died. But the expulsion of the invader had been accomplished with Austrian aid, and Austria naturally insisted on participation in the structure which was about to arise. The Germanic Confederation, accordingly, which was created to maintain the external and internal safety of Germany, and the independence and inviolability of the Confederated States, consisted of the Sovereign Princes and Free Cities, whose common affairs were confided to a Diet sitting at Frankfurt under the presidency of Austria. Denmark was a member for the Duchy of Holstein, and the Netherlands for the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. The principle of equality was carried so far that the large and middle-sized States possessed one vote apiece, while the lesser principalities and the Free Cities shared votes between them. The total number of votes was seventeen. An echo of the era of emancipation was heard in the article which provided that every member would introduce constitutional government.

Germany was to live under the shadow of the Bund for half a century; but its insufficiency was patent from the first. Humboldt's original scheme had been whittled down by Austria and the Southern States, and in its final form, as he rightly complained, it was adapted not for positive but for negative activities. It was, indeed, little more than an unreliable insurance society for the *status quo*. The two Great Powers, Prussia and Austria, could not be expected to take very seriously a body in which they could be outvoted at any moment by the weaker members. Though the main purpose of the Bund was the defence of its territories against external foes, no arrangements were made for a federal army. The article declaring that constitutional government would (not must) be established was ignored by the majority of its members. The amendment of the Constitution was rendered difficult

if not impossible by the right of any member to veto a change. Every unit was at liberty to make alliances so long as they were not directed against the Bund or any of its members. And, finally, the Federation was dominated by Austria, who possessed not only the chairmanship of the Diet but a casting vote.

The Bund was a mere aggregation of States, without common interests or means of defence ; and the latent antagonism of Austria and Prussia paralysed its activities. Such a system could never fulfil the hopes of unity and liberty that had inspired the great struggle, nor satisfy the mounting ambitions of Prussia. The history of Central Europe during the next half-century is the record of the efforts of the German people to break the fetters imposed upon them by the Federal Act of 1815. There was, however, no agreement as to the form which the change should take. Some dreamed of a division into a North under the influence of Prussia and a South under the influence of Austria ; others of a Triple system, in which all the members of the Bund outside Austria and Prussia should form a group, capable of defending the interests of the minor States against the two Great Powers ; others, again, of a United Germany under the leadership of Prussia. Thus the absence of an agreed alternative prolonged the existence, far beyond its natural term, of a nerveless and reactionary body which depressed instead of fostering the noblest aspirations of the German people.

The experiment of the newly founded Federation opened hopefully with the grant of Constitutions in the South German States ; but Frederick William III showed no intention of fulfilling his solemn promise to his people. He was indeed hardly his own master, for the Bund was dominated by the Holy Alliance, and the Holy Alliance was the tool of Metternich, in whose eyes Constitutions conjured up the hated spectre of French Jacobinism. The ferment among the Burschenschaften, culminating in the Wartburg demonstration of 1818, scared the rulers, and the murder of

Kotzebue in 1819 by a student caused Hardenberg to exclaim, "Now a Constitution is impossible." Metternich was supplied with the arguments which he needed, and the Carlsbad decrees bound the German Press and universities in fetters. A ray of hope was shed by the French Revolution of 1830, the repercussions of which were felt in Brunswick and Hanover; and the regime of reaction was assailed from abroad by the scintillating raillery of Heine and Börne. Yet it was clear that no advance towards self-government could be achieved so long as Metternich ruled at Vienna and Frederick William III reigned at Berlin.

During the generation that followed the overthrow of Napoleon the cause of national unity made no greater progress than that of political liberty. Yet in both cases the aspiration remained and sought anxiously for the means of its realisation. Almost every champion of either ideal was also the champion of the other; but so urgent a necessity was the creation of a national State that leading Liberals in different parts of Germany simultaneously reached the conclusion that Prussia must take the lead. In 1831 Paul Pfizer, a Württemberg publicist, in his *Correspondence of Two Germans,* forcibly argued that the cultural individuality and significance of Germany could only be preserved by the creation of a national State; that such a task was beyond the capacity of Austria; and that Prussia alone, with her efficient bureaucracy and powerful army, could lead the people to the desired goal. A similar gospel was proclaimed by the historian Dahlmann, who added, however, that an essential preliminary was the adoption by Prussia of constitutional government.

Prussia herself was meanwhile preparing for the rôle to which she was summoned rather by the subjects of other States than by her own. With the resignation of Humboldt in 1819 and the death of Hardenberg in 1822 the last of the great Liberals passed from the scene; for Stein was living in retirement, if not in disgrace. The creation of provincial Diets in 1823

was intended as a final intimation that no representative assembly was to be expected. Henceforth the country was ruled by bureaucrats whose names were almost unknown during their lifetime and are now forgotten. Yet beneath the drab exterior progress was made in several directions. The Civil Service was the most efficient in Europe ; the army was strengthened by the reforms of Boyen ; education was zealously fostered. Above all, material prosperity was increased by the Zollverein, inaugurated by a treaty with Hesse-Darmstadt in 1828, which in a few years embraced almost the whole of the Bund with the exception of Austria. The aims of Motz and his associates were purely economic ; and its prophetic significance as an expression of the unity of Germany under Prussian auspices was more easily detected by a later generation than by contemporaries. It was a time of strenuous and honest work ; and the country responded to the stirring appeal of List, fresh from his sojourn in America, for the systematic development of the whole range of its productive capacities.

The death of the dullard Frederick William III in 1840, and the accession of his brilliant son, Frederick William IV, inaugurated an era of hopeful expectancy. The change of ruler synchronised with a revival of national feeling, provoked by French threats during the Turco-Egyptian crisis.

> " Sie sollen ihn nicht haben,
> Den freien deutschen Rhein,"

cried Nikolaus Becker ; and it was at this moment that Hoffmann von Fallersleben composed the beautiful song :

> " Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles, über alles in der Welt."

The first act and speeches of the King encouraged the conviction that a new chapter was about to open. The aged Arndt was restored to his chair, and Dahlmann, who had been deprived of his post at Göttingen by the offended King of Hanover, received a call to Bonn. The censorship was modified, and the

political lyrics of Freiligrath embodied the longing of the educated bourgeoisie for the twin blessings of unity and liberty. It was known, moreover, that the King was by no means satisfied with the Bund, and that he was considering in what form he could carry out his father's promise of a Constitution. His range, however, was limited; for, though less inhospitable to new ideas than his father, he was equally opposed to the Liberalism derived from England and the Radicalism imported from France. The bright dawn clouded over, and Freiligrath, more in sorrow than anger, poured out his laments in the poem "Deutschland ist Hamlet."

After prolonged and anxious consideration, Frederick William IV finally decided to content himself with summoning the eight provincial Diets to a joint meeting at Berlin in 1847, and his opening address to the United Landtag explained with almost brutal clarity the limits of his advance. No power on earth, he declared, should persuade him to transform the natural relationship between Prince and people into a conventional and constitutional form. He would never allow a written sheet to interpose itself like a second Providence between God in Heaven and the country, and to take the place of the old consecrated loyalty. It was the duty of the Crown to rule in accordance with the law of God and the State and his own unfettered discretion, not according to the will of the majorities. He would never have dreamed of summoning the Landtag had he imagined that its members would lust after the rule of "so-called representatives of the people." Despite these hectoring tones the Landtag, mainly composed though it was of the landed nobility, replied that it could not regard itself as the fulfilment of the promises of Frederick William III, and expressed a hope that wider powers would be granted. The King promised to consider any representations and undertook to summon the Landtag within the next four years.

Further he would not go, and when his demand for the election of a Standing Committee was ignored by the majority, he dismissed the members in anger. The convocation of the United Landtag was nevertheless a landmark, for representatives from every part of Prussia met in deliberation for the first time, and their speeches were reported in the Press.

In the opening weeks of 1848 influential Liberals in different States demanded a German Parliament, and a Provisional Executive in place of the Federal Diet. So ambitious a programme seemed to have little chance ; but at this moment the overthrow of Louis Philippe started on its course a wave of revolution which surged across Europe. The spell of authority was broken, and the champions of unity and liberty seized their chance. Without asking or securing permission from the princes, the leaders summoned a preliminary parliament (Vorparlament) to Frankfurt to make the necessary preparations for the election of the National Assembly, which met in the Paulskirche on 18th May.[1]

The modern history of Germany contains two chapters which arouse the admiration and sympathy of other lands. The first is the reconstruction of Prussia after the catastrophe at Jena. The second is the attempt of the Frankfurt Parliament to win unity and liberty for a nation by peaceful discussion. In the middle of the eighteenth century the philosophic despots of Austria and Prussia were ahead of their subjects. In the middle of the nineteenth century the peoples were in advance of their rulers. The educated middle class looked with envy on the constitutional liberty of Victorian England, and the Professors, the most influential factors in the formation of opinion, were almost to a man adherents of moderate Liberalism. The party of Radical Republicans, led by Hecker and Struve, was small, and the great majority of the members who jostled one another in the Pauls-

[1] See Valentin, *Frankfurt und die Revolution von* 1848–9.

kirche desired to build on existing foundations. Never, indeed, has an assembly been composed of men of nobler ideals, deeper culture, or more unblemished record. Among its chief ornaments were the three veterans, Arndt, Dahlmann, and Jakob Grimm, all of whom had suffered for their devotion to liberty. The best minds of Germany had joyfully responded to the call.

The task of the Frankfurt Parliament and the spirit in which it was approached were explained in a speech in which its elected President, Heinrich von Gagern, opened the proceedings. "We have to frame a Constitution for Germany, and we derive our authority for this purpose from the sovereignty of the nation. It is difficult, indeed virtually impossible, to accomplish it by any other means. Germany desires to be one, a single State, ruled by the will of the people with the co-operation of all its members." In this spirit of manly self-confidence the members proceeded to their task. The first duty was to create an executive. After vain attempts to secure agreement between the Governments, Gagern proposed and carried the election of the Archduke John as Reichsverweser, or administrator; for it was hoped that the compliment to the uncle of the Emperor of Austria would disarm the hostility of the most powerful member of the Bund. The Archduke, a man of mediocre abilities but liberal sympathies, promptly accepted the invitation. It was decided that the authority of the Diet should cease when the Administrator entered on his duties, and that he should exercise his authority through responsible ministers. This did not involve the death of the Diet or the dissolution of the Bund, but merely the alteration of the constitutional machinery pending a final settlement. The leading figures of the Ministry were its chief, Prince Karl of Leiningen, half-brother of Queen Victoria, and Schmerling, the Austrian representative in the Diet, who became Minister of the Interior.

To the framework thus constructed neither Prussia nor Austria offered open resistance; but they had no intention of recognising an authority established without their concurrence. When the Minister of War decreed that every member of the Federation should order its troops to swear fidelity to the Administrator and to the future Constitution, only the minor States obeyed. The members of the Frankfurt Parliament, indeed, were living in a world of make-believe; for no permanent changes in the Constitution of 1815 were possible without the consent of the two Great Powers. It was in vain that Uhland demanded the consecration of the rulers of Germany "by a full drop of democratic oil." As the debates on the Constitution dragged on through the autumn the difficulties of the reformers increased; for the traditional antagonism between Grossdeutsche and Kleindeutsche, North and South, the champions of Prussia and the champions of Austria, dominated and distracted the Assembly.

In January 1849 the draft Constitution was complete. An Emperor, ruling through responsible Ministers, was to be chosen from the reigning German princes; but it was not determined whether the office was to be hereditary. Two months later it was decided to offer the Imperial crown to Frederick William IV, and a deputation was sent to Berlin to receive his reply. The King had passed through deep waters during the year of revolutions. In the "March days" of 1848 he had witnessed revolt in his own capital, and he had been compelled to accept Camphausen, a Liberal Rhineland industrialist, for a few months as a Constitutional Prime Minister; but his mystical doctrine of divine right forbade him to receive the Imperial crown from the hands of the people. It was for the princes, he declared, not the people, to choose their ruler. In vain did his Ministers beseech him to seize the occasion to serve Prussia and Germany at the same time. "In those days," he

observed to Ranke, "we all crawled on our stomachs." He was in no mood for further humiliation. The hour had come, but not the man.

The refusal of its invitation dissolved the Frankfurt Parliament, and wrecked the experiment on which the best minds in Germany had been at work for a year. The sectional attempts to frame fresh schemes of unification were equally unsuccessful. The revolutionary wave had spent its force, and the old order was restored in Austria and Hungary, Italy and Germany. It is a mistake, however, to dismiss the men who crowded the benches of the Paulskirche as doctrinaires. That they lacked political experience was their misfortune, not their fault; and the Constitution, the principal fruit of their labours, was a skilful compromise between the ideal of national unity and the vested interests of particularism. In attributing the control of foreign affairs, the army, fiscal policy, and law to the central government, and financing it from indirect taxation, its authors anticipated the Bismarckian edifice. Moreover, the majority recognised that the path to their goal lay through the strongest of the purely German States. It was not their fault that the King of Prussia, who spoke of 1848 as the year of disgrace, was the slave of mediæval ideas, or that Schwarzenberg declined to surrender the dominant position secured to Austria by the existence of the Bund. All that could be accomplished within the narrow limits imposed on them by circumstance was done. The German people had learned to think, but not to act. Ideas could make a Constitution but not a nation. Yet the toilers in the Frankfurt vineyard had not laboured wholly in vain. They had focussed the demand for unity and liberty, and their debates fostered the political education of the people. Though the Constitution was still-born, the conception of German unity was embodied for a brief space in concrete form. And finally, the prolonged debates between Grossdeutsche and Kleindeutsche led increasing num-

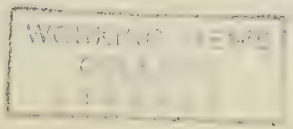
bers to the conviction that dualism was the enemy, and that, so long as Austria had a finger in the pie, Germany was doomed to remain a geographical expression.

Frederick William IV had cut a sorry figure during the months of effort and enthusiasm, and his loyalty to Austria was rewarded by the humiliation of Olmütz, after Prussia had yielded in the constitutional dispute in Hesse-Cassel. Radowitz, his closest friend, was more of a philosopher than a statesman. Schwarzenberg, on the contrary, was a realist, and when the two Powers differed in regard to the business of the Bund, he was not afraid of the arbitrament of war. Thus Prussia emerged from the years of storm and stress with diminished prestige at home and abroad. The Constitution granted in 1850, with its three-class system, its open voting and its indirect election, left the authority of the ruler virtually unimpaired; yet the King gave it a grudging consent, and a secret political testament urged his successors to decline the oath of fidelity. Manteuffel, his chief official adviser, was a bureaucrat of moderate opinions; but power was in the hands of the Camarilla, headed by the Gerlach brothers, who confirmed the King in his feudal romanticism, and encouraged him to hold fast against "the revolution." Prussia fell back into the sterile inertia which had followed the promulgation of the Carlsbad decrees. Geibel alone continued to embody in verse the hope and idealism of the 'forties; and henceforth the test of a hide-bound orthodoxy was applied to intellectual activities, and the secret police were as active as when Metternich was in command. "We are living on our reputation," complained Manteuffel in a memorandum which he drew up, but which he dared not present to his unbending master. Reformers waited for the death of the King, as in the 'thirties they had waited for the death of his father. Frederick William IV had no children, and all eyes were turned to his soldier brother, Prince William,

whose disapproval of the royal policy was notorious and who spoke the idiom of the modern world.

In 1856 the King suffered the first of a series of paralytic strokes, which clouded his mind and unfitted him for rule. The Prince of Prussia became Regent, and from 1858 he was King in all but name. The Camarilla disappeared and the era of stark reaction came to an end; for the Prince, though Conservative by temperament and training, was far too modest and matter-of-fact to indulge in the high-faluting romanticism of his gifted brother. His main interest was in the army, and his chief ambition on reaching the throne was to raise Prussia from the depths into which she had been plunged by mismanagement at home and abroad. For that purpose it was necessary to restore confidence between the Crown and the people, and to prepare the army for whatever tasks might await it. The "new era" opened with the choice of new advisers. With the aid of Roon, the Minister of War, the army was increased and supplied with the needle-gun. At the same moment the expulsion of Austria from Lombardy in the summer of 1859, and the object-lesson of the unification of Italy under the House of Savoy, encouraged reformers for the first time in ten years to renew their demands. In September 1859, the National Union was founded at Frankfurt by the Hanoverians Bennigsen and Miquel, with the aid of Schulze-Delitzsch and other trusted leaders of the Liberal Opposition in the different States. The Frankfurt Constitution of 1849 was disinterred and amended. Prussia was to lead; but Prussia, like all the other units, was to be subject to the central government and parliament. German Austria might join if she wished. Despite the frowns of Austria and the majority of the princes, the Nationalverein grew rapidly in numbers and influence. Though its principles were too democratic for the taste of the Prussian Regent, he placed no obstacle in the path of its propagandist activities.

The fair vision of a Prussian ruler co-operating with resurgent Nationalism faded as quickly as it had arisen ; for the Regent, who succeeded to the throne on the death of his brother in 1861, found himself involved in a bitter conflict with his subjects in regard to the far-reaching scheme of military reform on which he and Roon had set their hearts. A dissolution of the Chamber in May 1861 failed to break the ranks of the Opposition, which commanded a majority in the Lower House. The problem was no longer merely the fate of a particular measure, but whether King or Parliament was supreme. The King was determined to secure his programme, and was prepared to dispense with Parliamentary sanction for the Budget which it involved. The Opposition, on the other hand, stood on the letter of the Constitution, and his Ministers, though without exception Conservatives, shared the view that his attitude was unconstitutional. Some of them, indeed, flatly declined to follow him and resigned ; and the harassed monarch, though resolved never to yield, turned to thoughts of abdication in favour of his son. The document was drawn up, and the Crown Prince summoned to Berlin ; but at this moment Roon intervened to avert an irrevocable decision. It was the King's duty, argued the Minister of War, not to surrender so long as he could find men to support him in his struggle against Parliamentary claims. He himself would never desert his master, and Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen, the Prussian Ambassador in Paris, should be called to the head of the Ministry. " He is not here, and he will not do it," replied the King. " He is here, and he will do it," rejoined Roon. For he had telegraphed to his old friend on his own responsibility and explained the situation ; and the King thereupon decided to see Bismarck before signing his abdication. On the result of that fateful discussion the fortunes of Germany and the future of Europe were to turn.



CHAPTER II

THE EMPIRE

BISMARCK has described in his *Reflections* the momentous conversation with King William at Babelsberg on 22nd September 1862.[1] With the formula of abdication on the table before him, the King explained that he could only reign in accordance with his conscience, and that he could not discharge his duties without suitable Ministers. Was Bismarck prepared to advocate the reorganisation of the army in opposition to the majority in Parliament? When the visitor unhesitatingly asserted his willingness, the King declared, "Then it is my duty, with your help, to attempt to continue the battle; and I shall not abdicate." On 30th September the new Prime Minister explained his standpoint in the Budget Committee of Parliament in a few challenging phrases. "Germany does not look to Prussia's Liberalism but to her power. Prussia must concentrate her power until the favourable moment, which several times already has been allowed to pass; for her frontiers are unfavourable to a healthy body politic. The great questions of the time will be decided not by speeches and resolutions of majorities —that was the mistake of 1848 and 1849—but by blood and iron."

The author of this declaration, which reverberated through Europe like a thunderclap, had won his spurs in the debates of the first United Diet in 1847. The claim of the Opposition to enlarge its powers filled the Pomeranian Junker with contemptuous anger, and inspired him to champion the royal prerogative in a series of speeches which marked him out as the leader of the Extreme Right and earned the gratitude of the

[1] See Ward, *Germany*, vols. 2 and 3; Dawson, *The German Empire*; Brandenburg, *Die Reichsgründung*; Sybel, *Die Begründung des deutschen Reiches*; *Die Grosse Politik der Europaïschen Kabinette*, vols. 1–6; Rachfahl, *Deutschland und die Weltpolitik*; Oncken, *Rudolf von Bennigsen*.

King.[1] The surrender to the Berlin mob in the March days of 1848 stirred him to wrathful pity ; but when his name was suggested for a post in the Ministry, Frederick William IV wrote in the margin " Only to be employed when the bayonet governs unrestricted." He had no sympathy with the Frankfurt Parliament, and warmly approved the King's refusal to accept the Imperial Crown at its hands. Its failure confirmed his conviction of the futility of deliberative assemblies, while the surrender at Olmütz taught him the bitter lesson that the Bund was merely the façade of Austrian dictatorship. His appointment in 1851 as Prussian envoy to the restored Diet took him behind the scenes. " I had come to Frankfurt well disposed towards Austria," he writes in his *Reflections* ; " but the insight into Schwarzenberg's policy of *avilir puis démolir* which I there obtained dispelled my illusions." His advice was frequently sought by the King, who on more than one occasion vainly pressed him to take office. During his eight years at Frankfurt he worked out a programme of German unity through the expulsion of Austria by the Prussian sword. Three years in the Embassy at Petrograd and a few months at Paris further enlarged his knowledge of the policy and the rulers of the leading Powers of continental Europe. On his appointment as Minister President and Foreign Minister of Prussia in October 1862 he had no more doubt as to his goal than of his capacity to reach it. " I know that I can save my country, and that no one else can," cried Chatham ; and Bismarck entered on his task with the same massive self-confidence. Since the death of Frederick the Great, Prussia had lacked both a long-range policy and a firm hand, and in consequence her position on the European chess-board had never been

[1] No adequate biography of Bismarck exists. The work of Erich Marcks, planned on too spacious lines, has not advanced beyond the first volume. His *Reflections and Reminiscences* deserve prolonged study. The best general sketch is by Grant Robertson.

commensurate with her power. Cavour had made a nation, and he would follow suit.

The first task of the Ministry of Conflict was to carry through the military reforms, with the invaluable assistance of Roon, in the teeth of the powerful Fortschrittpartei, founded in 1861, and despite the protests of the Crown Prince. The next was to announce to the world that Prussia had come of age by declining the Austrian invitation to attend a Council of Princes at Frankfurt. In the same year the death of the childless Frederick VII of Denmark set in motion forces which under Bismarck's skilful guidance were to carry him swiftly to his goal. In 1864, as in 1849, Holstein's membership of the Bund brought Austria and Prussia into the fray ; and it was his incomparable achievement to unite the rivals for the defeat of the Danes and to divide them in the distribution of the spoil. The victories of 1864 were his first answer to the pedants who placed Parliamentary obstacles in his path, and the victories of 1866 were soon to bring the great majority of his critics in ecstatic submission to his feet. When the hour of decision arrived most of the minor German States chose the Austrian side ; but Prussia enjoyed the advantages of unity of control, and Bismarck and Moltke were a host in themselves. Hanover, Saxony, and the South were paralysed by a few quick blows ; the Prussian armies converged on Bohemia ; and Benedek was driven from the stricken field of Sadowa. On that fateful day Prussia took her place at the head of the table by a title which none could challenge. The dualism which had paralysed the country for half a century disappeared ; Austria withdrew ; the Bund was dissolved ; and a united Empire was already visible round the next turn of the road.

The failure of the Frankfurt Parliament cleared the stage for Bismarck and rendered his work both possible and legitimate. "Was die Professoren gewusst," declared the historian Sybel, one of his converted

antagonists, "das hat Bismarck gekonnt." The unification of Germany was as legitimate an ambition as the unification of Italy, and we must weigh Bismarck and Cavour in the same scales. Neither Germany nor Italy could call her soul her own till Austria was extruded; and, as she declined to go, she had to be expelled by arms. The two greatest statesmen of the nineteenth century had to solve similar problems, and they solved them by similar means. The war of 1859 was prepared with the same cold-blooded deliberation by Cavour as the war of 1866 by Bismarck. The makers of kingdoms and empires build with different degrees of skill, but their bricks are cemented with blood. "If we did for ourselves what we do for our country," confessed Cavour with disarming frankness, "what rascals we should be." Their grateful countrymen forgave them their sins, and their victims, in reflective moments, knew that they had been beaten at their own risky game.

The transformation in German mentality which set in with the victory of Sadowa was of scarcely less world-wide significance than the change in the political map of Europe. The needle-gun had destroyed not only the army of Benedek but the Liberalism of Germany. Bismarck tactfully asked for a bill of indemnity for unconstitutional action, and the bourgeoisie, which had been democratic for a generation, and had founded the Fortschrittpartei to defend its political rights, turned National Liberal out of gratitude. Nothing was more natural than the stampede of the majority in the Prussian Chamber into the Government camp. "This year," wrote Gustav Freytag, novelist, publicist, and scholar, "Germans have regained what to many had become as unfamiliar as the Völkerwanderung or the Crusades—their State. It has become a joy to be a German, and it will soon be reckoned a great honour among the nations of the earth." A nation rarely obtains more than one of its demands at a time. On the overthrow of the Directory in 1799 France required order and liberty; but she obtained order alone. In

the third quarter of the nineteenth century Germany needed unity and liberty ; but she received unity alone. Moreover, the military effort involved in winning her unity not only diminished her chances of securing liberty, but weakened her desire to obtain it. After the shattering verdict of Sadowa it required strong nerves to oppose the Man of Destiny, and the constitutional conflict ended with the general recognition that power was more precious than self-government.

The incomparable greatness of Bismarck consisted not more in his careful diplomatic preparation for each step in turn than in the moderation of his use of victory. It had required all the resources of his skill to convert his master to the notion of a war with Francis Joseph ; but when King William had drunk the heady wine of victory, the vision of a triumphal entry into Vienna rose before his eyes, and it proved even more difficult to rein him in than it had been a few short weeks before to set him in motion. Bismarck was never intoxicated by success, and when his programme was carried out he refused to enlarge it. To prolong the war was to invite and indeed to compel the intervention of Louis Napoleon, who was hovering over the Rhineland like a hawk. His object had been to expel Austria from the Bund, not to diminish her territory nor to inflict an incurable wound. In abstaining from the annexation of Austrian Silesia and Northern Bohemia he was looking ahead to the time when Vienna and Berlin might once again need and find each other's assistance against a common foe.

The exemplary moderation displayed by Bismarck towards defeated Austria was not altogether lacking in his treatment of the Austrophil members of the Bund. Ground between the upper and lower millstone, the choice before the minor States had been difficult, and the decision of Baden at any rate, where King William's son-in-law, the Grand Duke Frederick, was at the helm, had been reluctant. The shrill voice of Treitschke, himself a Saxon, summoned Prussia to

unify Germany by swallowing the Bund; but Bismarck was too close a student of political physiology to ignore the traditions of historic particularism and the claims of dynastic allegiance. Despite the protests of his master he contented himself with the annexation of Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, and the City of Frankfurt, while Saxony and the South were left intact. The expulsion of Austria carried with it the surrender of her rights in the Elbe Duchies, which passed under the sceptre of the Hohenzollerns. The path was now clear for the creation of the North German Federation, under the headship of Prussia, and with a Reichstag sitting at Berlin. The Constitution of 1867 declared the King of Prussia the permanent head of the new Bund, and concentrated executive power in the hands of a Federal Chancellor. The Staatenbund was transformed into a Bundesstaat. The princes and governments of the component States were represented in the Bundesrath or Federal Council, while a sop was thrown to Cerberus by the institution of universal suffrage for the Reichstag. The consecration of German unity by "a drop of democratic oil," to use Uhland's phrase, was a clever and innocuous expedient; for Bismarck took care that the Chancellor should be responsible to the powers above him, not to the powers below. Moreover, the three-class Prussian franchise, the sheet-anchor of Conservative domination, remained imbedded in the national life, and might be trusted to counteract the vagaries of an inexperienced Federal electorate.

The compelling motive for terminating hostilities before Sadowa was a fear of Louis Napoleon; and with the elimination of Austria Bismarck turned his eyes westwards, where a struggle appeared to him inevitable. The Emperor was a convinced champion of nationality, and he never doubted that Germany had as good a right to her unity as Italy herself; but the throne of a usurper needs prestige to hold it erect, and Napoleon III, obsessed with his life-long ambition

to tear up the Treaty of Vienna, cast his roving eye on the Rhineland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. Bismarck was now strong enough to refuse what in the height of the conflict he would have been tempted to yield, and France was forced to watch Prussia expanding without receiving a tasty morsel for herself. Meanwhile Bismarck concluded secret military conventions with the South German States, where the decision of Sadowa was taken as final, and where the friends of German unity under Prussian leadership were rapidly growing in numbers and influence.

The prowess displayed by Prussian arms in the brief campaign of 1866 should have taught the French Emperor caution; but in a trial of strength with Prussian Germany he counted on the assistance of Austria, who was still smarting under her defeat, and hoped at least for the neutrality of the South German States.[1] Negotiations with Vienna were begun but not concluded when the acceptance of the invitation to Prince Leopold, a younger son of the Catholic branch of the Hohenzollerns, to mount the throne of Spain stirred France to angry protest. In accordance with the wish of King William the Prince withdrew his candidature; but the Emperor, not content with his triumph, madly demanded a promise that it should never be renewed. The demand was refused, and Abeken's report from Ems, skilfully edited by Bismarck, precipitated a declaration of war. South Germany joined the North German Confederation; Austria was neutralised by the fear of attack from Russia, whose goodwill had been providently secured during the Polish insurrection of 1863; the Emperor surrendered at Sedan and Bazaine at Metz; and the war ended with the capitulation of Paris and the proclamation of the German Empire in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Not a hand was raised in Europe to prop the tottering throne of the Imperial gambler, and few regretted his fall.

The loftiest summits of achievement are never

[1] See Lord, *Origins of the War of* 1870.

scaled without the aid of luck; and Bismarck was favoured by a whole series of fortunate accidents and incidents—the discredit of academic Liberalism, the staunchness of King William, the expert collaboration of Moltke and Roon, the attempt of the Danes to trample on the autonomy of the Duchies, the selection of Benedek in place of the Archduke Albrecht to command at Sadowa, the eviction of Queen Isabella from Madrid and the search for a foreign ruler, and, finally, the moonstruck resolve of Louis Napoleon, after the Hohenzollern candidature had been withdrawn, to telegraph a humiliating demand to the King of Prussia. Such openings and opportunities were gifts of the gods; but what other statesman of the modern world except Cavour would have known how to turn them to account?

Bismarck had played his cards with almost superhuman mastery, and the skill with which he arranged that both Austria and France should fight alone, when the moment arrived to settle accounts, constitutes the most dazzling chapter in the history of modern diplomacy. But in the moment of victory he committed an error which in the light of events must be reckoned the greatest mistake of his career. After preventing the annexation of Austrian territory in 1866 by what he always remembered as the severest struggle of his life, he allowed the short-sighted soldiers to have their way in 1871. Outside France the annexation of Alsace and a portion of Lorraine was regarded as the natural penalty for a Power which had declared war and had been defeated. It was an abomination to transfer masses of human beings from one allegiance to another without consulting their wishes; but such is the common practice of mankind. Bismarck must be condemned less for following evil tradition than for sanctioning a settlement which he himself did not wholly approve. "I do not want too many Frenchmen in my house," he remarked. His plan was to content himself with Alsace, the dis-

mantling of Metz, and a larger indemnity; and it was a calamity for the world that he allowed himself to be overruled by the men whose horizon was bounded by strategical considerations. Alsace, German in blood and language, might perhaps have been gradually reconciled to the unwelcome change by a more generous and considerate treatment than she was destined to receive; but Lorraine was bound to prove as indigestible as Posen or North Schleswig and to invite rough measures of coercion which kept alive the bitter memories of the past.

The fatal results of the Treaty of Frankfurt were hidden in the womb of the future, and the German people surrendered itself to the joyful emotions of a victory that was far more than a military triumph. "Some day," wrote Geibel in 1859, "the Lord will remove the shame of his people. He who spoke on the field of Leipzig will speak once more in thunder." His prophecy had been fulfilled. Millions of German hearts swelled with gratitude to the soldiers, statesmen, and rulers who, after years in the wilderness, had led them with drums and trumpets into the Promised Land. Their country was at last a nation. The nightmare of civil war and foreign invasions was at an end. The North German Confederation was transformed into the German Empire by the adhesion of the Southern States, and the *amour propre* of Bavaria was flattered by some innocent constitutional privileges. The Reich consisted of twenty-two States and the three Hanse towns. The Imperial dignity was conferred on the Kings of Prussia in perpetuity; but Bismarck took care not to ruffle the feathers of the German princes. King William became German Emperor, not Emperor of Germany, and the juridical sovereignty of the Reich was held to reside in the totality of the federated governments. The Constitution, indeed, represented a skilful compromise between conflicting claims and principles.[1] Though

[1] See Howard, *The German Empire.*

Prussia contained more than half the population of the Reich, she contented herself with fourteen votes out of fifty-two in the Bundesrath. A further sop was thrown to the minor States by the selection of Leipzig for the Imperial Court of Appeal. Little enthusiasm for Prussian hegemony could be expected in the South, and the achievement of German unity under Prussian headship caused as little satisfaction to Gervinus and Constantin Frantz as the consummation of Italian unity under the House of Savoy brought to the republican soul of Mazzini. It was, however, almost universally recognised that the unification of Germany had taken place in the only possible way, and the democratic federal franchise contented the vast majority of the population. There was no more talk of the sovereignty of the people, which had been the inspiration of the Frankfurt Parliament. In 1848 the prestige of governments was at its nadir, in 1871 at its zenith. With few exceptions a grateful country was prepared to leave the supreme control of its fortunes to the paladins who had made it not only a united nation but the most powerful state in the world.

The internal structure of the Reich was as firmly knit as the front which it presented to its potential foes. The Emperor William, who had fought in the Wars of Liberation and whose career symbolised the transformation of Prussia from the tool of Austria to the unchallenged hegemony of the German race, commanded affectionate reverence. On the steps of the throne stood the Crown Prince, of knightly bearing and noble heart, to whose accession men of Liberal ideas looked forward with eager expectation. The Imperial Chancellor, impregnably intrenched in the confidence of his master and the gratitude of the people, wielded a power with which no statesman in Europe could compete. The military and social prestige of the army, officered in the main by the tough-fibred aristocracy of Eastern Prussia, was at its height ; the teachings of Clausewitz were unchallenged, and the

retention by the veteran Moltke of his post as Chief of the Staff seemed to constitute an additional guarantee against the danger of attack. The Civil Service was a model to the world. Foreign scholars flocked to the universities, and the provision for secondary and technical education was more generous than in any other part of the Continent. The Lutheran Church was a trustworthy department of State. The bourgeoisie was thrifty and industrious; the working-classes were not yet caught in the toils of Socialism; and German industry was rapidly overtaking the British lead.

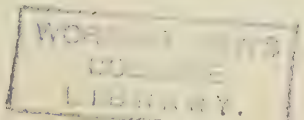
The prospects for the new Empire were bright; but it could hardly be expected that it would live up to the promise of its birth, and in his handling of domestic emergencies the Chancellor lost his sureness of touch. At a time when it was of vital moment to rally all the deeper forces of national life to the support of the Imperial structure, he engaged in a struggle with the Catholic Church which stirred millions of loyal subjects to passionate anger. He emerged not indeed defeated but badly bruised, and saddled with an enlarged Centrumspartei in the Reichstag under the accomplished leadership of Windthorst. Annoyed by the claims of the Vatican Council and by the growth of the Polish element in the eastern provinces, he fought in the name of the sovereignty of the State; but there was an element of personal pique in the bitterness with which he confronted the challenge to his omnipotence. The substitution of Leo XIII for Pius IX, however, built a bridge for his retreat, and, despite his vow that he would never go to Canossa, he made his peace with the Church. The spectacle of vacant sees and of venerable ecclesiastics in prison, during the Falk regime and the currency of the May Laws, acted as a tonic to Catholicism in Germany, and welded its supporters into an invincible party at the polls.

The Chancellor's second domestic battle met with no greater success. Bebel has described in his auto-

biography the foundation of the Social Democratic party at the Eisenach congress in 1867, and the struggles of its early years against the embattled powers of the State.[1] Bismarck and Lassalle had met and discovered a good deal of common ground; but the death of the latter in a duel in 1864 left the field open to Marx, with whose disciples neither Bismarck nor any other European statesman of his time could be expected to parley. Despite their refusal to vote credits for the war of 1870, their opposition to the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, and a term of imprisonment for treasonable intentions, Liebknecht and Bebel increased the number of their supporters at every election, and built up a party in the Reichstag which it became impossible to ignore. The attempted assassination of the Emperor in 1878 supplied the Chancellor with a pretext for a law which drove their journalists into exile and muzzled their Press; but persecution swelled the Socialist poll as it swelled the poll of the Centrum. After a decade of experience, he recognised that the movement could not be suppressed by coercion alone, and determined to fight it with its own weapons. Socialism was a world-wide phenomenon, the child of modern industrialism; and to Bismarck belongs the honour of meeting it half-way by a comprehensive system of state-aided insurance against the physical dangers and economic vicissitudes of the worker's life. Though neither kicks nor halfpence arrested the rapid growth of Social Democracy in the teeming cities of Protestant Germany, the social legislation of the 'eighties assisted the working-class to attain a standard of life unknown to the generation which had founded the Empire.

The internal unity with which the Empire set out on its course was still further dissipated by the change in fiscal policy in 1879 which broke up the National Liberals and forced the Chancellor to depend hence-

[1] The standard work is Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*. Cp. Oncken's admirable biography, *Ferdinand Lassalle*.



forward on the support of the Conservatives, who had hitherto cared more for Prussia than for the Empire. The indemnity of two hundred millions levied on France and paid off with unexpected rapidity had encouraged speculation and led to a financial crisis. Bismarck frankly confessed that he had never given economic theory a thought; but the crash of 1873, followed by over-production in some of the staple industries and by the growing competition of Russian and American corn, provoked a demand for the protection of the home market. There were, moreover, political considerations impelling him in the same direction. The Reich was entitled to meet any deficit by contributions from the States, which alone possessed the power of levying direct taxation; and these contributions, instead of forming a temporary stop-gap, threatened to become the mainstay of Imperial finance. The system was irksome to the States and derogatory to the dignity of the Federal Government. The simplest method of meeting the situation was to increase the Imperial revenues by raising the custom duties; and, once converted, the Chancellor pushed through the Tariff Bill with his usual ruthless energy. The revival of Protection strengthened the political influence of the Junkers, and placed fresh obstacles in the path of democratic advance.

In foreign affairs, his chosen field, Bismarck's matchless skill avoided the errors which blemished his policy at home. After obtaining what he set out to accomplish, he was never tempted to fresh adventures. "We are satiated," he declared emphatically; and the adviser of three wars became the pillar of peace. "It has always been my aim," he wrote, "to win the confidence of Europe and to convince it that German policy will be just and peaceful, now that it has repaired the *injuria temporum*, the disintegration of the nation." He preferred limited liabilities, and was wholly unaffected by the passion for oversea conquest and colonisation which seized the Great Powers in the

later decades of the century. Europe was his chessboard, on which he knew every move of the game, and on which no rival could challenge him with hope of success. His governing aim was to maintain the *status quo* established by the Treaty of Frankfurt, and for this purpose to keep France in quarantine. He was under no illusions as to her attitude, and he was convinced that if she could find an ally she would renew the struggle. His task, accordingly, was to banish " the nightmare of coalitions " by furnishing the other Powers with no motive for clasping her outstretched hand. In the years immediately following the war, no country was tempted to link its fortunes with the impotent victim of a catastrophic defeat. At Vienna, Beust was dismissed by Francis Joseph, who recognised that it was useless to kick against the pricks, and whose visit to Berlin in 1872, at the same moment as Alexander II, laid the foundation of the Three Emperors' League. England remained aloof but friendly, and new-born Italy hardly counted among the Great Powers.

The supremacy of Germany on the Continent was never so unchallenged as during the four years following the surrender of Paris. The policy of keeping France in isolation required for its success the almost superhuman skill which the first German Chancellor alone possessed ; but to avoid a slip proved beyond even his capacity. When France surprised the world by her rapid recuperation and the renewal of a formidable army, Moltke began to fear that the war might have to be fought over again. Bismarck had no desire for a fresh conflict, and he believed that warnings would avert it ; but his mind was haunted by the spectre of a clerico-royalist restoration in France, co-operating with a Papacy angered by the Kulturkampf, and reviving the dreams of a Hapsburg *revanche*. The anxious query of the *Post*, " Is War in sight ? " was taken so seriously in France, and not in France alone, that for the first time since 1871 Europe

began to doubt whether Bismarck was after all a guardian of the peace. The Tsar and Queen Victoria intervened with moderating counsels at Berlin, and the crisis passed away as quickly as it arose. It was in vain that Bismarck declared in tones of injured innocence that the scare had been invented by his enemies ; and in that brief hour the notion of a Franco-Russian *rapprochement* was born. The incident is a milestone in the diplomatic history of Europe, for the potential danger of the new Empire to the security of the world was suddenly realised. " I never dreamt," wrote Sir Robert Morier, one of the keenest of observers, " that within three years after the conclusion of peace a fresh danger to civilisation from the renewal of war would be directly traceable to Germany having learnt and exaggerated the besetting vice of the people she has conquered. For there is no denying that the malady under which Europe is now suffering is caused by German chauvinism, a new and far more formidable disease than French, because, instead of being spasmodic and undisciplined, it is methodical, cold-blooded, and self-contained."

Two years later the tension between Paris and Berlin was eased by the defeat of President MacMahon's royalist intrigues and by the triumph of the Republicans under the leadership of Gambetta, who, unknown to the mass of his countrymen, had already abandoned the notion of a war of *revanche*. Between Berlin and Petrograd, on the other hand, the friendship which had lasted since the Wars of Liberation was beginning to cool. The revolt of the Balkan Christians against the yoke of the Sultan in 1875 evoked a wave of Panslav emotion in Russia which swept Alexander II into the conflict ; and when the Congress of Berlin tore from his brow some of the laurels of victory culled by the Treaty of San Stefano, he reminded his uncle of the promise never to forget his aid in 1870, and turned savagely on Bismarck, who had allowed, if not actually engineered, his humiliation. Alarmed by the threat of

war contained in an ill-advised letter in the summer of 1879, Bismarck hurried to Gastein, where he and Andrassy fashioned the Dual Alliance, which provided for mutual assistance in face of a common danger. For although Austrian neutrality had been secretly purchased by the bait of Bosnia and Herzegovina before Russia embarked on her struggle with Turkey, the two Powers were now open rivals for influence in the Balkan peninsula. The necessity of taking sides in their quarrel was deeply regretted by Bismarck, and even more by his aged master. There was, however, no alternative; for, though Russia was the stronger of the two, Austria was a more reliable partner. Moreover, it was a triumph to secure the final acceptance of the verdict of Sadowa. Andrassy refused the suggestion that Austria should defend her ally against a French attack; but some compensation was found when Italy entered the orbit of the Central Powers in 1882, and Roumania secretly followed suit in 1883.

The League of the Three Emperors was revived after the murder of Alexander II in 1881, but was finally wrecked by the Bulgarian crisis which resulted from the revolution of the autonomous province of Eastern Roumelia against its Turkish overlord in 1885, and its union with Bulgaria. By a curious and discreditable paradox, Russia, who had created the Bulgarian State in 1878, and endeavoured to secure it ample frontiers by the Treaty of San Stefano, withdrew her favour when she discovered that her *protégé* resented a position of vassalage. Prince Alexander of Battenberg was hunted from his throne, and the implacable Tsar refused to recognise Ferdinand of Coburg as his successor; but Austria stoutly withstood the claims of Petrograd to regain the footing in the Balkans from which she had been dislodged by the Treaty of Berlin. For three years Europe was kept in turmoil by the danger of a conflict in the Near East, and it required the sleepless vigilance of Bismarck to avert it. The

happiness and desires of the Bulgarian people were nothing to the arch-realist. "In Bulgaria," he declared, "I am Russian"; and he added in winged words that the Eastern Christians were not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier. Yet he warned Russia against an attack which would bring the Dual Alliance into play. His policy satisfied neither side, but it preserved peace. When the second term of the League of the Three Emperors expired in 1887, neither Vienna nor Petrograd was in a mood to renew it; but though the wire to Petrograd had worn very thin, he saved what he could from the wreck by the secret treaty of re-insurance with Russia concluded for another three years.

The anxieties of the Bulgarian crisis were intensified by the collapse of the *quasi-entente* between Paris and Berlin, which had enabled Republican France to lay the foundations of a new colonial empire. The fall of Ferry in 1885, on the occasion of a minor reverse in Indo-China, announced a violent reaction against the risks of adventure overseas, and was followed by the resurgence of the passions of the *revanche*. The crowd found its hero in General Boulanger, who, according to President Grévy, on two occasions during his brief ministerial career proffered advice which involved hostilities. When in 1887 Schnaebele, a French Police Commissioner, crossed the frontier for official business under a German safe-conduct, and was promptly seized by German police on a charge of encouraging espionage under a warrant issued by the Supreme Court at Leipzig, Europe held its breath, and it seemed as if the guns would go off by themselves. The brief crisis ended with the release of Schnaebele, and a few months later Boulanger was removed from the Ministry of War. He remained the hero of the crowd, and on his election for Paris he was adjured by his friends to march on the Élysée. He missed his opportunity, and, shortly afterwards, fled from Paris to escape arrest for high treason. The Boulangist bubble had burst; but the meteoric

career of the adventurer left deep furrows in the memory of the German nation.

Though the Russian Government was aware of Bismarck's moderating influence, and detested the atheistic radicalism of Paris, the growing volume of opinion found vent in the *Moscow Gazette*, in which, in 1886, Katkoff, the most powerful man in the country after the sovereign, exhorted Alexander III to change the orientation of Russian policy. The logic of events, he argued, pointed to a Franco-Russian entente, and a strong France was essential to European equilibrium and to the recovery of Russia's influence among the Powers. At the same moment a similar demand was advanced from the other end of Europe by Déroulède and other leaders of the *revanche*. The Bismarckian system began to crack, and the Chancellor's reply to Boulanger and Katkoff was given in the Reichstag on 11th January 1887, when he introduced a new Army Bill a year before the expiry of its predecessor.

The debate opened with a brief but pregnant speech by the aged Moltke, who painted the dangers of the Fatherland in sombre colours. " None of us is ignorant of the seriousness of the time. Everyone asks, Is war coming ? I do not believe that any statesman will deliberately apply the match to the gunpowder heaped up in every land. But the passions of the mob, the ambition of party leaders, misguided public opinion—these are elements potentially stronger than the will of the rulers. If any country can work for peace it is Germany, which is not directly concerned in the questions which excite the other Powers. But to carry out this rôle of mediation we must be ready for war. If the demand of the Government is refused, I believe that war is certain. Give us our provision for seven years."

Bismarck's two-hour speech—the greatest of his career—filled in the bare outlines of the Field-Marshal, and revealed the unchanging principles of his system. " We have no warlike needs, for we belong to what

Metternich called satiated States. We do not expect an attack from Russia. The Eastern question is not a *casus belli* for us. The friendship of Russia is of more value to us than that of Bulgaria. The difficulty is not to keep Germany and Russia, but Austria and Russia at peace, and it is our duty to ingeminate peace in both Cabinets. We risk being called pro-Russian in Austria, and still more in Hungary, and pro-Austrian in Russia. That does not matter if we can maintain peace. Our relations with Austria rest on the consciousness of each that the existence of the other as a Great Power is a necessity in the interests of European equilibrium, not on the notion that the one places its whole strength at the service of the other. We do not ask Austria to take part in our quarrels with France or in colonial difficulties with England, and in like manner we have no interests in Constantinople."

Turning to the west, the Chancellor declared that Germany had tried to oblige France everywhere except in Alsace and Lorraine. "We have no intention and no reason to attack her. I would never fight because I thought a war might be inevitable. I cannot see into the cards of Providence. If the French will keep the peace till we attack, then peace is assured for ever. Do we want more French soil? I was not anxious to take Metz. I have complete confidence in the present French Government. But the stimulation of the *feu sacré* by an active minority makes me anxious. We have still to fear an attack—whether in ten days or ten years I cannot say. War is certain if France thinks she is the stronger and can win. That is my unalterable conviction. She is infinitely stronger than she was. If she won, she would not display our moderation in 1871. She would bleed us white, and, if we win, we would do the same to her. The war of 1870 would be child's play compared with 1890 or whatever the date. The Government and the army chiefs cannot assume responsibility for doing nothing. There is also the possibility, even if France did not expect to win, that

she might launch a war as a safety-valve, as in 1870. Indeed, why should Boulanger not do so ? "

At the end of 1887 Boulanger was no longer a Minister ; but his popularity was undimmed, and the Austro-Russian tension was more acute than ever. It required Bismarck's utmost skill to keep peace at a time when the military chiefs in the three Imperial capitals longed to decide the dragging dispute by force of arms. " The German Empire," ran the speech from the throne on 24th November, " has no needs which could be satisfied by victorious wars. But in defence we are strong, and we shall become so powerful that we can confront every danger without fear." These declarations were elaborated by the Chancellor's speech of 6th February 1888, when, for a second and last time, he surveyed the European situation as a whole. " Like last year, I expect no attack. Yet the danger of coalitions is permanent, and we must arrange once for all to meet it. We must make greater exertions than other nations on account of our position. Russia and France can only be attacked on one front ; but God has placed us beside the most bellicose and restless of nations, the French, and He has allowed bellicose tendencies to grow up in Russia. We shall wage no preventive war. If we were to attack, the whole weight of the *imponderabilia* would be on the side of our opponents. But I advise other countries to discontinue their threats. We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world." The proud peroration was rewarded by a storm of applause, which echoed through the Empire, and by the passage of the last Army Bill which the first Chancellor was to propose. The speeches of 1887 and 1888 were a warning to France and Russia not to push their hostility too far. But there was a lesson to be learned by his countrymen as well. Germany was surrounded by dangers, which it was her duty to meet not merely by increasing her troops but by treading the cautious path which had kept the peace since 1871.

A month after the second speech the Emperor William died at the age of ninety-one, and with him fell the firmest of the Chancellor's props. The hundred days of the Emperor Frederick were too few to give the tilt to the left for which the survivors of German Liberalism had been longing; and the accession of William II, who professed an almost idolatrous worship of his grandfather, seemed to guarantee the maintenance of the Bismarckian policies. The old Emperor on his death-bed whispered to his grandson that he must always remain friends with Russia; and the fact that the young ruler began his round of visits with Petrograd suggested that he had taken the hint. William II and his Chancellor were equally in agreement as to the necessity of the cordial relations with England. In furtherance of his unchanging plan of safeguarding the *status quo*, Bismarck had made more than one approach to Beaconsfield in the 'seventies; but he had never presented such a definite request for an alliance as at the opening of 1889. "The peace of Europe can best be secured by a treaty between Germany and England, pledging them to mutual support against a French attack. A secret treaty would ensure success in such a war, but its publication would prevent it. Neither France nor Russia will break the peace if they know for certain that they would have England against them." After consulting his colleagues, Salisbury replied that he hoped to live to see the time when he could accept the offer. "Meanwhile we leave it on the table, without saying yes or no. That is unfortunately all I can do at present." A day or two after the Prime Minister's conversation with the German Ambassador, Chamberlain, at that time a private member, suggested the exchange of German South-West Africa for Heligoland, adding significantly *Sine Germania nulla salus*. In the summer the young Emperor paid his first visit to England, which gave no less pleasure to the hosts than to the guest.

Though the new reign opened auspiciously, the

shadows soon began to fall. "He will be his own Chancellor some day," observed the old statesman of Prince William in 1886. The *condominium* worked with little outward friction for a year; but neither of the two men was content with a share of power. "I discovered," wrote the Kaiser, "that my Ministers regarded themselves as Bismarck's officials." Differences of opinion in regard to the renewal of the anti-socialist law of 1878 and an International Congress on the conditions of labour were aggravations rather than causes of the tension. "The real question," observed the Grand-Duke of Baden, who took the part of his nephew, "was whether the Bismarck or the Hohenzollern dynasty should reign." To this question there could only be one answer, and in March, 1890, the founder of the German Empire was dismissed. His son Herbert, whom he had appointed Foreign Minister, and whom he had trained to succeed him, dutifully followed his father into political exile. The reign of Bismarck, which had lasted nearly twenty-eight years, was at an end, and the ship of State drifted towards uncharted seas with a young, impulsive, and inexperienced pilot at the helm.

No statesman of the modern world has left such a legacy of grandiose achievement as the first German Chancellor, and the greatest of realists would have scorned to be measured by any standard save that of success. Yet the world judges cricketers not only by their scores but by the spirit in which they play. The defect of *Realpolitik* is that it tends to think more of immediate than of ultimate returns. The adroit manipulation of the Ems telegram, like the invasion of Silesia, triumphantly successful as they were in their temporary purpose, taught Europe to be deeply suspicious of Prussian statecraft. Bismarck was content to work for his country alone and was satisfied with its applause. The ideal of a European commonwealth resting on spiritual foundations, entertained

by "Professor" Gladstone, was unintelligible to him. The phrase "blood and iron" clings to his memory like the stain on the hand of Lady Macbeth. He had, moreover, forged a weapon which in less skilful hands might prove dangerous to its owner, and not to its owner alone.

CHAPTER III

AFTER BISMARCK

THE hopes of a Liberal Empire which had floated round the head of the Emperor Frederick were buried in his grave ; and the young ruler, who at the age of thirty-one dropped the pilot, was aware rather of the splendour of his inheritance than of the difficulty of preserving it against material and spiritual foes.[1] The burden of personal rule was assumed with a light heart, for he was fortified by a self-confidence which nothing could shake. " There is only one master in this country and I am he." " Those who will help me I will heartily welcome ; those who oppose me I shall break." In language reminiscent of the mystical royalism of Frederick William IV, he declared that he was responsible for his actions to God and his conscience alone. Summoning Caprivi to bend the bow of Ulysses, he comforted him with the assurance, " I will assume responsibility." In his first speech in the Prussian Diet the bluff old General confessed his political inexperience, and modestly defined his task to be that of leading the German people, after an age of great men and great deeds, back into the prose of common life. The new Chancellor justified his selection ; and the young Emperor, delighted at exchanging a master for a tool, reported to Francis Joseph that he was " loyal and firm as a rock."

In its main outlines Bismarck's domestic policy was continued by his pupil. The attempt to kill Socialism by kindness soon broke down, and the Sedan celebrations of 1895 inspired him to attacks on the " traitorous rabble " and " fellows without a fatherland," whose growing numbers filled him with indignation. To minds rooted in the tradition of dynastic autocracy

[1] See *Deutschland unter Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 3 vols, 1914 ; Dawson, *The German Empire*, vol. 2 ; Bülow, *Imperial Germany*. Foreign policy should be studied in *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette* ; Brandenburg, *Von Bismarck zum Weltkrieg* ; Hammann, *Der missverstandene Bismarck* ; Jäckh, *Kiderlen-Wächter*.

every increase in the Socialist ranks seemed a fresh argument against concession. Thus no serious attempt was ever made to reform the antiquated Constitution of 1850. Despite her schools, her science, and her Socialists, Prussia remained in essentials the military and bureaucratic State created by Frederick William I. From the Junker provinces east of the Elbe came food for the cities and officers for the army. Their strength was recognised by the Emperor and was never forgotten by themselves.

> " Unser König absolut
> Wenn er unsern Willen thut,"

ran the mocking couplet. Its justice was proved when in 1901 they destroyed without hesitation a Canal Bill introduced by the Prussian Government and supported by the Emperor, which would have lowered the price of bread in the swarming cities. Such demonstrations of class selfishness naturally provoked discontent; but the parties of the Left never mustered courage for a combined attack on the political system which placed power in the hands of their opponents.

The growth of a new class of industrial magnates merely served to strengthen the Imperial system. The National Liberals had become in everything but name a party of the Right, and their support of the Government on vital issues was as steady as that of the Junkers. Unlike his father and grandfather, William II took an eager and intelligent interest in applied science, and was fully aware of its importance as a factor of national power and wealth. He maintained the dynastic connection with the Krupps, and admitted Ballin into his private circle.

While in domestic politics William II maintained the system which he found in operation, in foreign affairs he struck out a line of his own. With his master's assent Bismarck had resolved to renew the secret treaty of 1887 in 1890; but the question was

reconsidered after his fall and the decision was reversed on the ground that a secret agreement with Russia was incompatible with loyalty to the Austrian ally. When Bismarck complained that the telegraph wire to Petrograd had been cut, Caprivi denied the charge, and explained that he merely wished to keep the current in the wires connecting with Vienna and Rome. Bismarck's tone was, indeed, too shrill; for the Franco-Russian *rapprochement*, of which the first fruits was the loan of 1888, was moving steadily towards its appointed goal. The lapse of the treaty was the accelerator rather than the cause of the Dual Alliance, of which the foundations were laid in 1891.

Though "the new course" opened with a dramatic departure from the Bismarckian tradition, the Colonial agreement concluded with Great Britain in June 1890 was in some measure a reversion to type. Caprivi frankly confessed that he was "no Colonial enthusiast," and he reminded his countrymen that they must cut their coat according to their cloth. "We must ask ourselves how much colonising strength we possess, how far the available money and human resources will go. Germany has too many irons in the fire." In limiting his oversea commitments and strengthening the ties with England, the second Chancellor was the disciple of the first; but the acquisition of Heligoland opened up possibilities which were envisaged by the Kaiser alone, and were to carry the Empire into the danger zone of naval rivalry from which Bismarck had held steadily aloof. The intimacy between London and Berlin was further fostered by the annual visits of the Kaiser and by the warm expressions of his gratitude and goodwill. "The aim of our policy," wrote Caprivi to the German Ambassador in London, in words which might have fallen from Bismarck's lips, "is gradually to win England for an official adhesion to the Triple Alliance."

From the fall of Bismarck to the fall of his master a generation later the foreign policy of the German

Empire lacked a single directing hand. Marschall von Bieberstein, who succeeded Herbert Bismarck in the Wilhelmstrasse, knew no more of diplomacy than Caprivi, while the Kaiser was scarcely less new to his task. Under these circumstances a large share of influence was exerted by Holstein, the cleverest of Bismarck's pupils and the guardian of the *Arcana Imperii*. The division of power necessitated the discussion of problems which had hitherto been determined by a single omnipotent will, but there was no security for the consistent pursuit of an agreed and far-sighted policy. The opening of the Kiel Canal in 1895, which was graced by the presence of French and Russian squadrons, and adorned by tactful speeches from the eloquent host, seemed to disprove the gloomy prophecies of the Bismarckian Fronde; but the Anglo-German honeymoon was nearing its end, and the cautious Caprivi had been thrown to the agrarian wolves. His successor, Prince Hohenlohe, had wished for the office in 1890; but when it came to him in 1894 he was old and tired, and he quickly realised that his master wanted nothing but a dignified figure-head. Like Caprivi and all other statesmen of the older generation, he accepted the Bismarckian premise that Germany was satiated; but at no period of his reign was the Kaiser so much his own master as during the three years that elapsed between the fall of Caprivi and the appointment of Bülow, and it was during this period that his first great error was committed.

A month after the Kiel festivities the Kaiser paid his annual visit to Cowes. But on this occasion his overbearing conduct aroused the resentment of the Prince of Wales, while a discussion with Lord Salisbury on the Armenian massacres revealed a deep-seated difference as to the future of Turkey, and left a disagreeable impression on both sides. The bonds of friendship had already been loosened when the Jameson raid strained them almost to breaking-point. The Kaiser's declaration in his Memoirs that he disapproved

the Kruger telegram is false ; for he desired a stronger, not a weaker protest. The telegram was bad enough, but still worse was the warning that Germany could not allow any attack on the independence of the Transvaal. The communication never reached the Prime Minister, for Lord Salisbury repudiated the Raiders, and the news of their surrender arrived in time for it to be recalled. The mischief, however, was done. It was in vain that Marschall explained to the British Ambassador, and that the Kaiser wrote to his " beloved grandmamma," that no unfriendly intentions inspired the telegram. The two Governments were soon on friendly terms again, and Germany's moral support of the reconquest of the Sudan was a welcome contrast to the settled hostility of Russia and France ; but for the first time the thought of war had floated before the eyes of two angry nations, who never fully trusted one another again. " The Raid was folly," observed Salisbury to Eckardstein in 1899, " but the telegram was even more foolish." The Franco-Russian alliance, which was publicly announced in 1895, increased the importance for Germany of British goodwill. For some years the Kaiser had followed the path of wisdom ; but his personal tactlessness had diminished his popularity in England, and in the Kruger dispatch he threw what was left of it to the winds. That he had already sown dragon's teeth in the Far East by forcing victorious Japan to disgorge Port Arthur rendered the alienation of the British Empire even more deplorable.

With the substitution of Bülow for Marschall at the Foreign Office, and the appointment of Tirpitz to the Admiralty in 1897, Germany turned her back on Downing Street and entered on the path which led to the war of 1914. The aged Hohenlohe lingered like a super on the stage till 1900, when Bülow succeeded to the first post in the Empire ; but from 1897 to 1909 the country was ruled by a triumvirate. There were striking differences in temperament

between the ruler and his two chief advisers; but they were at one in their devotion to Weltpolitik. The Bismarckian system of limited liability, they agreed, was out of date, and the country was strong enough to seek fresh prizes, to take fresh risks, and to claim a larger place in the sun. A more challenging note began to be heard in the Imperial allocutions. The murder of two German missionaries in Shantung was followed by the seizure of Kiao-chau, and a squadron was dispatched under the command of Prince Henry to enforce the submission of Pekin. Its purpose, declared the Kaiser in bidding his brother farewell, was to make clear to the Europeans in China, to the German merchant, and above all to China herself that the German Michael had planted his shield firmly in the soil. "Should anyone attempt to affront us or to infringe our rights, strike out with mailed fist." Prince Henry's reply, couched in Byzantine phraseology which would have been as distasteful to the ears of William I as to the lips of Bismarck, announced that his whole desire was "to proclaim abroad, to all who will hear as well as to those who will not, the gospel of Your Majesty's anointed person."

The new orientation found its clearest expression in the desire for a fleet. The impotence of Germany to aid the Boers against the Jameson Raid revealed the meaning of sea power, and convinced the Kaiser that the time had come to realise the dream of his life. The rejection of a modest programme of shipbuilding by the Reichstag at the opening of 1897 was followed by a change at the Admiralty, and provoked the powerful War-Lord to the resounding declaration, "I will never rest till I have raised my navy to the same standard as that of my army." In Tirpitz he found a man of long naval experience, filled with a sense of Germany's world mission not inferior to his own, and possessing a driving power which no other actor on the post-Bismarckian stage approached. Within a few months of assuming office the Admiral introduced a

naval programme to be spread over seven years. A second novelty was that, while his predecessors had aimed at coast defence, a small battle fleet in home waters, and fast cruisers scattered over the globe for the defence of commerce, the new Minister aimed at the construction of a High Sea fleet. In commending his plan to the Reichstag, he declared that, if it were carried out, the fleet would, in 1904, cease to be a negligible quantity. The approval of the princes and ministers of the Federal States, of the Hansa towns and the universities, was sought by the indefatigable Minister of Marine, whose skilful propaganda included a translation of Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power on History*. A new spirit had entered the Admiralty, and a new spirit was soon to dominate the nation. "The times are past," declared Bülow in his first speech as Foreign Secretary, "when the German left the earth to one of his neighbours, the sea to another, and reserved the sky for himself." Despite the opposition of Radicals and Socialists, the Navy Bill became law in April 1898; a Navy League was founded which, though unofficial, enjoyed the patronage of princes; and in a speech at Danzig the Kaiser uttered the fateful words, "Our future lies on the water." It was in consonance with the accepted principles of German policy that the Hague Conference of 1899 was sharply warned off the burning topic which it had been summoned by the Tsar to discuss.

A further step away from the tradition of satiety was the inauguration of a forward policy in Turkey. Bismarck never forgot that the price for Russian friendship, or at any rate her benevolent neutrality, was a free hand in the Near East, and he believed that it would be advantageous to Germany if she were, "physically or diplomatically," in possession of Constantinople. William II, on the one hand, had no mind to leave such a tasty morsel to the Russian bear, and he resolved to build on the foundations that had already been laid by the military mission of General

von der Goltz and the investment of German capital. For half a century far-sighted Germans, among them List and Moltke, had dreamed of Asiatic Turkey as a sphere of influence or settlement; and in 1888, in return for a loan, a group of financiers, mainly German, headed by the Deutsche Bank, obtained a concession to administer the line from Haidar Pasha, opposite the capital, to Ismid, and to continue it to Angora, with a kilometric guarantee and a preferential right of extension. Angora was reached in 1892, and in 1893, in return for a further loan, a concession was granted to Konia, which was reached in 1896.

Up to this point German penetration had been purely commercial in character; but events presented the Kaiser with the opportunity to secure political influence at Constantinople, and he seized it with both hands. He resembled Bismarck in his ostentatious indifference to the sufferings of the Christian subjects of the Turk; but while the moral neutrality of the Iron Chancellor facilitated the designs of Petrograd at the expense of Turkey, the Kaiser strode forward as Turkey's sole champion against the pressure of the Powers. Thus while Russia opposed the cause of reform in Armenia and supported it in Crete, Germany opposed it in both; and while Western Europe rang with condemnation of the Great Assassin, William II grasped his blood-stained paw. He sent his portrait to Yildiz Kiosk, and as soon as the Powers showed that they meant business in Crete he withdrew from the Concert. The transference of Marschall von Bieberstein from the Wilhelmstrasse to the Bosphorus in 1897 brought into play a skilled diplomatist, no less determined than his master to win the confidence of Abdul Hamid and to make Turkey a political and economic outpost of the Triple Alliance. The predominant influence of Germany was confirmed by the spectacular journey of the Kaiser to Palestine and Syria in 1898, taking Constantinople in his stride. The climax of the visit was a memorable declaration at Damascus, which must

have made the Crusaders turn in their graves. "May the Sultan and the three hundred million Mussulmans scattered over the earth be assured that the German Emperor will always be their friend." The objects of the Imperial pilgrim were fully achieved. Germany had won the confidence of Constantinople, and was rewarded in the following year by permission to extend the Bagdad railway to the Persian Gulf. Henceforth Germans could dream of a through route from Berlin to Bagdad, as Englishmen spoke with alliterative pride of a Cape to Cairo railway.

The difference between the Bismarckian and the post-Bismarckian system was the difference between limited and unlimited liability. In the later 'nineties Germany was deliberately committed to the pursuit of Weltpolitik. The defiance of Japan, the Kruger telegram, the seizure of Kiao-Chau, the first Navy Bill, and the journey to Damascus were from one point of view an assertion of Germany's will to power, and from another an incalculable multiplication of risks. She had as much right to build a High Sea fleet as to push forward in the Near East; but each of them was likely to involve the antagonism of a Great Power. There was much to be said for one or the other; but a clear-sighted statesmanship would have reasoned that their simultaneous pursuit might create a coalition strong enough to pierce the burnished armour of the mightiest empire.[1]

The adoption of Weltpolitik as the official policy of the German Empire was generally approved. The Radicals, it is true, looked on with alarm; but they were declining in numbers, and Eugen Richter possessed little influence outside the Reichstag. When Bülow, in a private interview, endeavoured to win his support for the first Navy Bill by reminding him of the aspirations of Herwegh and the heroes of 1848, the veteran leader rejoined that he was too old to change. His

[1] The policy of unlimited liability is brilliantly analysed and denounced by Professor Johannes Haller, *Die Aera Bülow*.

attitude towards Imperialism, indeed, like his hard-shelled individualism, was out of date. The opposition of the Socialists was more formidable ; but their main interest lay in domestic, not in foreign affairs. Moreover, in both fields there were influences which kept their antagonism within bounds. The urban workers shared in the rising prosperity of their country, and they were not without pride in the prowess of their fathers. Bebel was well aware of the limits of his authority. " Das Volk ist noch immer siegestrunken," he observed to a friend in 1895, as a body of troops swung through the Brandenburger Thor. Nor was he insensible to the instinctive demands of patriotism ; for he announced in the Reichstag that his followers would resist aggression, and that he himself would shoulder a musket against a Russian attack. Thus the steady growth of the Socialist poll, party, and press was as powerless to deflect the Government from its chosen course as the buzzing of flies to impede the horseman in his advance. For the two parties of the Right—the Conservatives and the National Liberals—were always ready to applaud a forward policy ; and the Catholics, whom the Kaiser treated with far greater deference than Bismarck, had, on the whole, closer affinities with the Protestant Right than with the anti-clerical Left.

The inclusion of manhood suffrage in the Imperial Constitution had frightened the Conservatives ; but their alarm soon proved to be unfounded. The power of the purse, on which the House of Commons has built up the edifice of British democracy, was a weapon whose use was never learned by the Reichstag. For since Bismarck turned his countrymen from the pursuit of constitutional liberty to the quest for national power, the middle classes left the task of governing to the Government ; and the championship of democratic ideas passed to the Socialists, who could do nothing without the help of the bourgeoisie. Bismarck had complained that his countrymen were a nation of

grumblers ; but after Sadowa the grumbling never rose much above a whisper. Herder once described Germany as the land of obedience, and the failure of the Reichstag to make full use of its powers confirms the justice of his verdict. After the foundation of the Empire the strongest brains went into the army, business, or science, and the younger generation of party leaders were men of smaller calibre than Bennigsen and Bamberger, Windthorst and Richter, Liebknecht and Bebel. Explosions in the Reichstag were storms in a teacup, and recalcitrants could always be overcome by a dissolution on a patriotic appeal.

Though the Kaiser's devotion to Weltpolitik was beyond reproach, a section of his subjects demanded a firmer touch and pursued still larger aims. The notion of gathering all German-speaking peoples within a single fold had occurred to individual thinkers during the nineteenth century, and Lagarde, the Göttingen Orientalist, complained in 1874 that Bismarck had only created Little Germany.[1] The creation of a colonial empire in 1884 prompted new ambitions, and in 1893 the Pan-German League was formed under the auspices of Karl Peters, the notorious founder of German East Africa. Dr Class, a Leipzig lawyer, was elected President, and was joined by a number of professors, publicists, and business men. Its militant Imperialism grew with its numbers and influence, and wild talk was occasionally heard of incorporating German Austria and German Switzerland, while a few covetous eyes were cast on Holland and Flemish Belgium, and saw visions of a German colony in South America. Though the Pan-Germans received no official encouragement from the Government, their activities, like those of the Pan-Slavs, inflamed the national spirit ; and it was not till it was too late that the wiser heads realised the alarm which Pan-Germanism had provoked beyond the frontiers and the dangerous in-

[1] See the official publication, *Zwanzig Jahre alldeutscher Arbeit* ; and Andler, *Le Pangermanisme.*

fluence it exerted on a divided Government at moments of international tension.

The Boer War offered an opportunity for Germany to escape from the isolation to which the pursuit of Weltpolitik was leading her. When Bismarck had asked for a British alliance, he was told that the traditional policy of England was to keep her hands free. But when the alarms of Port Arthur and Fashoda were followed by a struggle in which the sympathies of the world were on the side of the Boers, the barometer in Downing Street began to fall. The Kruger telegram had put a stop to the Kaiser's annual visits, but on the outbreak of the Boer War an invitation was sent and accepted. After consultation with the Kaiser and Bülow, who accompanied his master, Chamberlain argued in a speech at Leicester that we should not remain permanently isolated on the Continent, and that the natural alliance would be with the German Empire. The speech echoed round the world ; but it found little response beyond the Rhine, where the doughty blows of the Boers at the British colossus were loudly applauded. The timid Bülow drew back, and the negotiations described in the vivid pages of Eckardstein came to nothing. The British offer of an alliance was declined on the ground that it would cut the wire to Petrograd, and might involve Germany in a war for exclusively British interests. A counter-invitation to Great Britain to join the Triple Alliance met with no favour from the Salisbury Cabinet, which desired a single powerful friend and limited liabilities. Despite Chamberlain's broad hint that if he could not reach an agreement with Germany he would make a deal with France and Russia, the warning was neglected by the Wilhelmstrasse, where the permanence of the British feud with France and Russia was an article of faith.

Had the rulers of Germany accepted the alliance for which Bismarck had asked in vain, and which was now freely offered, the Boer War would have inaugurated

an era of co-operation instead of strife. At the outset, it is true, and indeed so long as the struggle in South Africa continued, it would have been a purely official compact, for there was no love lost between the peoples ; but with time and care it might have grown into a union of hearts. The turn of the century was a watershed, from which the rills might descend with equal facility to the valley of peace or to Armageddon. The opportunity was lost, and untoward events deepened the cleavage between the two countries. The stoppage of the *Bundesrath* for suspected contraband on the east coast of Africa again reminded the German people of their impotence at sea ; and though Salisbury handsomely apologised, the incident forms a milestone in European history. The second Navy Bill, doubling the programme of 1898, was introduced and carried ; and the preamble explained the need of Germany for a fleet so powerful that war, even for her most powerful opponent, would involve too grave a risk. " Adventure and aggression are not in our minds," declared Bülow, " but we will not be brushed aside." The naval rivalry had begun, and henceforth the relations of the two countries were at the mercy of events. It was in vain that the Kaiser maintained a correct and indeed friendly attitude throughout the war, declining to receive President Kruger or to encourage Russian proposals for mediation. The divergent interpretation of the Yangtse Agreement of 1900 aroused suspicion on both sides ; the Anglo-Japanese alliance concluded in January 1902 diminished the British need for insurance against Russia ; the angry comments of the British Press on the joint coercion of Venezuela revealed the enduring hostility bequeathed by the Boer War ; the refusal of the British Government at the dictation of the Press to join in the Bagdad railway was resented as a sign of jealous hostility ; and the threat of retaliation on Canada for giving a preference to the goods of the mother country wounded a sensitive chord in the British heart. The store of ill-will, fed by mistakes on

both sides, was steadily accumulating, and was driving the controllers of British policy, as Chamberlain had threatened, in the direction of France.

The Anglo-French treaty of 1904 should have been a warning to the Wilhelmstrasse not to turn the *détente* between Paris and London into an *entente cordiale*. It was a blunder of the first magnitude on the part of Delcassé not to purchase German assent to his designs in Morocco as he had purchased the approval, publicly or secretly, of Great Britain, Italy, and Spain. But it was no less an error for Bülow to cement the newly-formed comradeship by threats of war which he had no intention of carrying out, and which confirmed the impression held in certain quarters that Germany was the bully of Europe. Nor were the efforts of the Kaiser at Björko to form a Continental *bloc* against British dictation more successful. To win France to the project was impossible, and the impressionable Tsar, at the advice of his Ministers, quickly withdrew his assent to an arrangement which the termination of the Japanese War deprived of its *raison d'être*. Within a few months of the signature of that short-lived pact, Great Britain and Russia found themselves standing side by side in defence of France at the Congress of Algeciras, and in 1907 the Anglo-Russian Convention removed the causes of friction in the Middle East. King Edward's visit to Reval in June 1908 announced to the world the creation of a Triple Entente confronting the Triple Alliance. To outward seeming the six Great Powers of Europe were divided into groups of equal numerical strength. But the situation was in reality less propitious for Germany, since Italy had one foot in each of the rival camps. Despite this unfavourable constellation, the Kaiser continued stubbornly to decline all public and private invitations to discuss a limitation of his fleet, which now loomed up as a menace to the security of the British Empire.

The energy, ability, and patriotic devotion of William II were gratefully recognised by the majority

of his subjects ; but the wisdom of his actions was often questioned, and his temperamental utterances provoked resentment and regret. The publication of an undated and anonymous interview in the *Daily Telegraph* on 28th October 1908, filled to the brim with revelations and indiscretions, caused the cup to overflow. A wave of astonishment and indignation swept over the country, and the monarch was forced to listen to censure from the party leaders and the Press which he had hitherto heard from the Socialists alone. The Chancellor himself made no attempt to hide his feelings, and for once the supple courtier summoned up courage to speak plainly to his master. The Kaiser, horrified at the violence of the outburst, toyed with thoughts of abdication and promised amendment. " The knowledge that the publication has not produced the desired result in England," announced Prince Bülow, " and has aroused excitement and painful regret in Germany, will lead him henceforth to observe even in private conversation the reserve which is essential to the unity of our policy and the authority of the Crown. If it were otherwise, neither I nor my successors could carry our burden. No one must forget the warning that we have all received." The storm, however, subsided almost as quickly as it arose. Though the Imperial orator kept silence for many months, he was wholly impenitent, and, after a decent interval, he dismissed Prince Bülow, whom he bitterly accused of having " betrayed " him in the Reichstag debates. The *Daily Telegraph* crisis was an incident, not a turning-point, and a complacent German people remained the sport and victim of capricious autocracy.

The substitution of Bethmann-Hollweg for Bülow, in June 1909, brought to the Wilhelmstrasse a man of lofty character, but of mediocre abilities and weak resolve. There was little chance that the fifth Chancellor of the German Empire would be able to modify either the system of government or the direction of policy, and his term of office is a record

of disappointment and failure. His half-hearted attempt to reform the antediluvian Prussian franchise broke down before the selfish will of the Junkers, and the belated concession of a Diet to Alsace-Lorraine brought neither tranquillity nor gratitude. His statesmanlike attempts to repair the widening breach with England by a naval agreement were frustrated by the opposition of the Kaiser, the determination of Tirpitz, and the propaganda of the Navy League. The Potsdam agreement with Russia terminated the opposition of Petrograd to the Bagdad railway; but the wider hopes which it inspired were wrecked on the sleepless rivalry between Russia and Germany's ally in the Near East. Even Kiderlen-Wächter, whom the Chancellor called to the Foreign Office to supplement his ignorance of foreign affairs, proved a thorn in his side, and during the anxious months of the Agadir crisis he was compelled to watch his masterful subordinate playing with fire and tearing down the edifice of Anglo-German confidence which it had been his fondest ambition to construct.

When the Agadir crisis ended with the signature of the Morocco and Congo treaties, the Chancellor resumed the negotiations with England which had been interrupted by the *Panther's* spring. The Haldane Mission mended the wire to London; but the *Novelle,* or Supplementary Navy Bill, complicated the issue, and the negotiations proved fruitless. Germany declined to limit her naval programme without a promise of neutrality in a European war, which England judged to be inconsistent with her loyalty to the Triple Entente. The stock of good will, however, was not exhausted, and the two governments proceeded to discuss the complex of problems connected with the Bagdad railway and the African colonies of Portugal. In both fields agreement was reached, and the loyal co-operation of the two countries in averting the development of the Balkan wars of 1912–1913 into a European conflagration produced a

welcome *détente*. Even Tirpitz seemed willing to contribute his mite by announcing his readiness to accept a proportion of ten to sixteen in capital ships.

While the relations of London and Berlin were slowly improving, the two other antagonisms by which Europe was racked lost nothing of their intensity. M. Poincaré's appointment as Prime Minister in 1912 and President in 1913, followed by the return to the system of three-years' military service, announced that France was morally and materially prepared to defend her interests. In like manner the increase of the German Army and a capital levy of fifty millions for strengthening the frontier fortresses, improving the artillery, and augmenting the gold reserve in the Juliusthurm at Spandau, revealed the conviction that a conflict was not far off. The centenary of the battle of Leipzig recalled memories of sacrifice and victory, and some frontier incidents fanned the flame of suspicion. The wilder spirits among the Pan-Germans were busy at their old game of map-making, and they were reinforced by the Wehrverein, whose founder, General Keim, declared that a war was inevitable. "There is a smell of blood in the air," echoed General Liebert; and General Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War* proclaimed not only the nearness but the essential rightness of war. The mass of the German people was as pacific as the Government; but a struggle was anticipated by many well-informed observers, who, like the Kaiser, had no wish to precipitate it.

The situation was even more alarming in the East than in the West. The Balkan Wars had witnessed a diplomatic struggle between Vienna and Petrograd, in which Germany had played a mediator's part. But the appointment of Liman von Sanders, in response to a request for a German officer to reorganise the Turkish Army after its defeat, diverted the main current of Russia's anger from Vienna to Berlin by threatening a new and formidable obstacle to her ambition of dominating the Straits. To Sazonoff's

angry protests the Wilhelmstrasse returned conciliatory replies, and a compromise was reached by Liman's exchange of the command of the First Army Corps at Constantinople for the post of General Inspector of the Turkish forces. Though the Tsar professed himself satisfied, the embitterment of feeling in Russian official and military circles remained. The Russian Press spoke openly of war for the possession of the Straits, and of the readiness of the army to wage it; and Germany was reminded of Skobeleff's declaration that the road to Constantinople lay through the Brandenburger Thor.

While dark clouds were gathering on the frontiers, the forces of the old and the new social order were striving for mastery. Despite the hectic passions of the long-drawn Agadir crisis, the election of January 1912 revealed the Socialists, who polled more than a third of the twelve million votes, as the strongest party in the country. The death of Bebel, however, had deprived them of their only parliamentary figure, and their influence in the Reichstag was in no way commensurate with their numbers. They constituted the main army of the Opposition, but they usually stood alone; for the bourgeois members of the Left and Centre were more frightened of Socialism than they were hostile to the government, and the representatives of the racial minorities were too few to count. Moreover, the prestige of the existing structure, which had at any rate brought power and prosperity, remained almost unimpaired. The wave of anger set in motion by an exhibition of militarism, naked and unashamed, at Zabern in the spring of 1914 beat in vain against the granite bulwarks of the Imperial system. Once more, as in the *Daily Telegraph* crisis, bold speeches were made in the Reichstag; the arrogance of the officer caste was castigated; the cruelty of non-commissioned officers to privates was denounced; the Chancellor was apologetic. And once again the storm blew over; the military caste laughed at its

impotent critics; the Crown Prince launched an approving telegram; the Kaiser stood firm. Once more the Reichstag showed that it could bark but not bite. In 1914, as in 1871, Germany was a State of soldiers and officials in the grip of a military autocracy, and the real holders of power were in no mood and, indeed, under no necessity to compromise with the whispered claims of democracy.

CHAPTER IV

FROM POVERTY TO RICHES

THE rapid transformation of Germany from a geographical expression into the strongest military Power of the world was scarcely more remarkable than the simultaneous change from homespun to purple and fine linen.[1] Prosperity came to her, as power had come, with a rush. The nineteenth century dawned on a poor country and closed on a rich one. The process had begun before Bismarck was called to the helm, and was immensely accelerated by political unification and by the spirit of buoyant enterprise which it bred. The rapid accumulation of wealth in turn fortified the power of the State by promoting the industrial, commercial, and colonial activities from which modern nations in large measure derive their strength and prestige. Though agriculture has not been neglected, the factory has beaten the farm, cities have sprung up like mushrooms, population has increased by leaps and bounds, and a rural community has become predominantly industrial. The founders of Germany's greatness were not statesmen and warriors alone, but chemists and bankers, inventors and shipowners, the lords of iron and the kings of coal.

The economic history of modern Germany opens with the Prussian *risorgimento* after the catastrophe of Jena. When the Revolution of 1789 emancipated the peasant in France, his deliverance from feudal burdens and disabilities in other European countries was only a matter of time. But while Jacques Bonhomme burned down his lord's *château*, and feudalism was swept away in a fine frenzy by the States-General, the evolution beyond the Rhine was slow and pacific. Enlightened princes like Karl

[1] See Dawson, *The Evolution of Germany*; Clapham, *The Economic Development of France and Germany*, 1815–1914; Sombart, *Die deutsche Volkswirtschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. 1913; Ashley, *Modern Tariff History*, ed. 1920.

Friedrich of Baden had given the signal before the Declaration of the Rights of Man inaugurated modern democracy; but the first great landmark was Stein's edict of 1807, by which the first blow was struck at serfdom.[1] The upper grades of peasant were permitted to own property, and freedom of occupation was allowed. The cotters who possessed no oxen and the serfs who worked for the lord were unaffected; but the work of emancipation was continued by Hardenberg and his successors, and the last remnants of legalised servitude were only cleared away in the third quarter of the century. There were several legal varieties of peasant, and in each case a different settlement had to be made. Some obtained the holdings they cultivated by ceding a third or a half to the lord, while the smallest holders retained the whole and paid a rent. Though liberty in Germany, as in other countries, was often the precursor of debt and failure, the creation of a free peasantry lifted an immense burden from the shoulders of suffering humanity, and added incalculably to the dignity and strength no less than to the wealth and happiness of the country. By the middle of the nineteenth century the peasantry owned the greater part of the land, except in Eastern Prussia and Mecklenburg, where large estates remained the order of the day and a feudal atmosphere continued to brood over the countryside. For the Junkers, who denounced Stein as a Jacobin, had obtained from Frederick William III in 1810 the *Gesindeordnung*, or Servants' Ordinance, limiting in practice the new legal privilege of free movement in the case of domestic servants and employees forming part of the master's household, and rendering the cancellation of contracts very difficult.

Soon after the abolition of serfdom the prosperity of rural Germany was fostered by the teachings of science. What England owes to Coke of Norfolk and Arthur Young, Germany owes to Thaer and

[1] See Knapp, *Die Bauernbefreiung*.

Liebig. The Berlin professor's *Principles of Agriculture,* published during the years of the French occupation, explained the secrets of good farming and summoned the State to supply technical instruction. Of even greater importance was the application of chemistry to agriculture in the early 'forties by Liebig, by whose researches in plant physiology and chemical manures cultivators of the soil all over the world have been enriched. To the older crops was added sugar beet, which, originating during the British blockade of Napoleonic Europe, took root and turned Germany into a great sugar-producing country. At the same time the potato won universal popularity, both as an article of food and as the raw material of industrial alcohol.

At the outbreak of the French Revolution the main social question throughout Europe was the condition of the peasantry ; for the problem of the urban worker had only begun to emerge in England, where the Industrial Revolution commenced half a century before anywhere else. At the opening of the nineteenth century, when the countryside was beginning to wake from its long sleep, Germany possessed no large city like London or Paris, and its population was scarcely larger than before the ravages of the Thirty Years' War. The Town Ordinance of 1808, the second of Stein's historic achievements, granted self-government to the towns ; but municipal liberty did not suffice to restore their economic life. The guild system, which had been the strength and glory of the mediæval city, had long fallen into decay, and the limitations on the free choice of a trade lay heavy on the sleepy little communities. While England was covering herself with factories and breeding a vast urban proletariat, the domestic system of industry ruled without challenge in a thinly populated, stationary, and agricultural Germany.

If the rural revival dates from Stein's Edict of Emancipation, the commercial renaissance begins with

the Prussian tariff of 1818. The Hohenzollerns had doubled their dominions in the Great War, and at the end of the struggle found themselves with a litter of provinces in different stages of political, social, and economic development. While administrative unification was gradually achieved by the highly trained Prussian bureaucracy, Maassen's tariff swept away all provincial barriers and introduced a single tariff for the whole country. The doctrines of Adam Smith had steadily filtered into Germany, and the tariff of 1818, which was envied by British Free Traders, allowed raw material free or at a nominal figure, while manufactures paid an average duty of ten per cent. Prussia was now the largest economic unit in Germany, and it was natural that she should form the matrix round which a wider unity might crystallise. The first of her neighbours to respond to the magnet was the duodecimo Thuringian State of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen ; but it is usual to date the beginning of the Zollverein from the treaty with Hesse-Cassel in 1828. Its creator, Motz, the Prussian Minister of Finance, the ablest official between Hardenberg and Bismarck, foretold in 1829 that it would lead to German unity under Prussia ; but this was an aspiration, not a policy, and the motives of its architects were purely economic. In 1834 it grew into an association of European significance by the entry of the South German States. Hanover and Oldenburg, Holstein and Mecklenburg, remained outside for the present, and shut it off from the sea. The tariff of 1818 was slightly modified by the imposition of heavier duties on iron and textiles ; but for two generations the larger portion of Germany lived under a fiscal system not far removed from Free Trade.

The Zollverein stimulated inter-state and foreign commerce ; but industrial and commercial progress was slow till the later 'thirties, when the construction of railways quickened the pulse of the whole civilised world. If the name of Motz stands for the achieve-

ment of fiscal unity, that of List[1] symbolises the systematic development of the national resources. The Württemberg publicist adopted the Protectionist creed in the years when the removal of the continental blockade and the import of British goods frightened a section of German manufacturers. His share in the constitutional conflict in Stuttgart led to imprisonment and exile; but the United States taught him the gospel which he was later to proclaim to his countrymen in commanding tones. The rapid growth of industry which he witnessed beyond the Atlantic convinced him that the unit of economic operations was neither the individual nor humanity, but the State. He returned to his fatherland in 1833 as American Consul at Leipzig, and threw his abundant energies into railway construction. The first German railway was built from Nuremberg to Furth, a distance of five miles, in 1835; but while his contemporaries were planning local connections, he had already worked out a comprehensive programme. His celebrated pamphlet, *On a Saxon Railway System as the foundation for a General German System*, published in 1833, bade his readers reflect on the immense possibilities of a connected system. The Leipzig-Dresden railway, built in 1839, was the first-fruits of his labours, and in 1840 Leipzig and Magdeburg joined hands. During the 'forties the whole country was covered with iron rails. The immediate effect on national life was even more invigorating than in England or France, which could boast of better roads and larger towns.

After encouraging his countrymen to provide themselves with railways, List expounded his philosophy in his *National System of Political Economy*, published in 1841, which occupies the canonical position in Germany held by *The Wealth of Nations* among ourselves. The gospel of economic nationalism, the nineteenth century equivalent of the mercantilism against which Adam Smith waged war, has never

[1] See Margaret Hirst, *Life of Friedrich List.*

been more skilfully or eloquently proclaimed. Power, he teaches, must be the chief economic aim,—a truth which had been forgotten by some of the disciples of "Smithianismus," who bowed the knee to the idols of individualism and cosmopolitanism. In words which anticipate the Bismarckian era, he calls on his countrymen to bestir themselves. "The whole culture of Germany is theoretical. A country can have too many scholars and too few workmen. To make a great, rich, and mighty nation are needed manufactures, free internal intercourse, foreign trade, shipping, and naval power." To these conditions of national strength he added, in a later work, colonies, in order to render the community as nearly as possible self-sufficing. Agriculture was not enough, for industry was the key to wealth and culture. To achieve the goal, careful planning and organised effort were essential. While Adam Smith and his German followers regarded the world from the economic point of view as one and encouraged exchange between its component parts, List thought in terms of self-sufficing communities developing their resources to the utmost. Internal customs he compared to bonds which fettered the limits of a growing organism, but tariffs seemed to him the condition of industrial advance. Thus the economic nationalism of List is at once the origin of the Historical School of Roscher and the Socialists of the Chair, with their gospel of Protection and State action, and at the same time the first signpost pointing the way to *Weltpolitik*.

Despite the Zollverein and the railway boom three-fourths of the population in 1850, as in 1815, lived in the country. The towns had grown slowly, manufactures had made little advance, and the national resources awaited development. With the opening of the second half of the century the pace quickens, and capitalist enterprise struggles to its feet. The discovery of gold in California and Australia and of new silver mines in Mexico brought a flow of the

precious metals to Europe, raised prices and wages, and stimulated production and speculation. The rapid economic development of Germany begins in the 'fifties with the formation of shareholders' companies and the foundation of the Darmstädter Bank in 1853, the first modern institution to finance large-scale industrial enterprise. Despite List's call for Protection, there was no disposition to abandon the low duties on which the Zollverein reposed. In 1862 Prussia concluded a reciprocity treaty with France, which was accepted by the other members of the Zollverein in 1865. The current was flowing in the direction of Free Trade, for in 1865 the agricultural duties were repealed, and in 1875 the duties on iron, the last wing of the Protectionist edifice, were abolished as from 1877. Emigration to America, which began when steamers crossed the Atlantic, carried away large numbers during the third quarter of the century, mostly from the villages, some seeking a freer atmosphere, others attracted by the dream of wealth.

The victories of 1870 gave a new youth to the nation, and kindled a spirit of adventure which led to overproduction and to the *Krach* of 1873. Partly owing to the complaints of foreign competition and partly to his desire to increase the revenues of the Imperial Government, Bismarck restored Protection in 1879, both for industry and agriculture. Whether the immense industrial and commercial development which followed was due to the new fiscal policy, as its authors maintained, or whether, as its critics argued, it was the fruit of science, education, and organisation, Germany had never witnessed such a rapid accumulation of wealth. List's programme of the systematic exploitation of national resources was carried out with a resolution and skill in no way inferior to the simultaneous development of the United States. Political regeneration and military success had laid the foundations for economic expansion, and the same diligent thoroughness which had made German scholarship

supreme and German armies victorious was now displayed in the race for wealth. Like the instruments in a well-trained orchestra, every organ of economic life was developed to its utmost capacity, while at the same time each gave and received assistance from the rest.

In no other part of Europe has the provision of credit for industrial undertakings played such a leading part as in Germany, where a willingness to take risks has been generally rewarded with success. The Darmstädter Bank was followed by the Discontogesellschaft in 1856, the Deutsche Bank in 1870, and the Dresdener Bank in 1872. The foundation of the four great business houses was followed in 1875 by the creation of a Reichsbank, itself the successor of the Prussian Bank instituted in 1847. The Reichsbank gradually became the sole bank of issue, and strengthened its position by the foundation of branches all over the country. The largest and boldest of the private concerns was the Deutsche Bank, founded by Georg von Siemens, which, in addition to financing enterprises at home, was the first to found branches and invest large sums abroad.[1] The most spectacular of its enterprises was the Anatolian railway concession of 1888, which paved the way for the Bagdad scheme. The exploitation of Turkey in Asia inaugurated by Siemens was brilliantly carried through by his gifted pupil, Arthur von Gwinner, and by his son-in-law, Karl Helfferich.

Of equal significance was the achievement of Werner von Siemens, the creator of the electrical industry. His invention of the dynamo-machine in 1867 facilitated the transmission of electricity, and the construction of the Prussian telegraph system was but one of his many enterprises. While Siemens was the scientific parent of electrical enterprise, it is, above all, to Emil Rathenau that Germany owes cheap electricity. Beginning his career as an apprentice in a factory, he devoted his life to devising new uses for electricity and con-

[1] See the full-length biography of Siemens by Helfferich.

structing appropriate apparatus. On a visit to an electrical exhibition at Paris in 1881 he was impressed by Edison's incandescent light, and returned home to found the German Edison Company for electricity, which grew, in 1887, into the Allgemeine Electrizität Gesellschaft. The policy of creating demand by cheapness was completely successful, and the A.E.G., as it is called all over the world, soon passed the Siemens-Halske combine in the race. The electrification of the tramways was Rathenau's greatest prize, and the dream of his later years was to electrify the railways.

The twin pillars of German prosperity are coal and iron, the former supplied from Westphalia, Upper Silesia, and the Saar, the latter from the portion of Lorraine annexed in 1871. The name of Krupp stands beside that of Bismarck and Moltke among the heralds of the new Germany. The world-famed business at Essen was founded in 1811 by Friedrich Krupp, whose modest home, adjoining the factory, still remains to emphasise the growth of a century. Dying in 1826 at an early age, he was succeeded by his son Alfred, under whose skilled guidance the firm developed in the third quarter of the century into the greatest armament factory ever known. The third Krupp, who succeeded to the control in 1887, proved unworthy of his forebears; but his business was firmly entrenched in public confidence. The race of armaments which followed the Franco-German War had brought grist to the mill, and cannon was supplied with profitable impartiality both to the Fatherland and its potential foes. By the end of the century Essen was the acknowledged capital of the Black Country, and its master the richest man in the Empire.

Next to Krupp, the greatest position in Westphalia was claimed by Thyssen, the German Carnegie. Beginning his meteoric ascent in the 'sixties with a small rolling-mill, the uncrowned king of Muhlheim realised the importance of controlling interrelated enterprises, and in the opening years of the present century he was

the owner of mines and factories, steamers and docks. When his reign was over, the sceptre of the Ruhr passed to Hugo Stinnes, whose grandfather was one of the pioneers of transport on the Rhine. On the eve of the World War Germany had beaten Great Britain in the production of pig-iron, was close behind her in coal, and outstripped all competitors in the supply of potash.

While the dimensions of the coal and iron trade were surpassed in the United States, in chemistry Germany led the world. The commanding figure of Liebig inaugurates the line of scholars who have turned chemical science to practical account ; and business men have testified to their faith in the value of research by the employment of a larger proportion of trained chemists than is to be found in any other country. The most celebrated achievement in this branch of applied science is the production of aniline dyes from coal-tar ; for though the discovery was the work of an Englishman, the countrymen of Perkin took no steps to apply it to the processes of industry, and left the field to foreign rivals. The newspaper slogan "Cheap and Nasty" which greeted the first impact of German competition soon proved to be ill-founded ; for the dyes of Baden, the optical instruments of Jena, and the toys of Nuremberg, to name familiar examples, set a standard to which other countries might be proud to attain.

Such giant strides could not have taken place without the provision of efficient transport by land and water. Though Bismarck's ideal of securing Imperial control of the railways was blocked by the smaller States, the important lines passed into the hands of their respective governments. The railway system won the reputation of being perhaps the best in Europe, and the profit on the Prussian lines formed one of the main sources of public revenue. Still more remarkable was the development of internal waterways. If Germany is poor in coast-line and harbours, she is generously supplied with navigable rivers, and has furnished herself with an elaborate system of canals. The traffic on the

Rhine, flowing in convenient proximity to the Westphalian coalfields, became a model of organisation, and the selfish opposition of the Junkers to the connection of Prussia's waterways was finally overcome in 1905. It was, however, on marine transport that the world fixed its gaze, and Ballin stands beside Siemens, Thyssen, and Krupp among the founders of Germany's economic greatness.[1] Entering the service of the Hamburg-Amerika line, when its capital was under a million, the young Jew began his services to the company by developing the emigrant traffic, and in 1900 he was appointed Director-General. The proud legend inscribed over the portals of the head office in Hamburg, *Mein Feld ist die Welt*, was quickly justified under the guidance of its incomparable chief. When he entered the business in 1886 it owned 26 ocean steamers, while in 1913 it possessed 180. In the same quarter of a century its capital increased tenfold. The Director aimed at the largest and most luxurious boats on the Atlantic, and in the last year of peace the *Imperator*, of 50,000 tons, sailed on her first trip. Ballin made the greatest of German shipping companies, as Tirpitz made the navy, and his countrymen were almost as proud of the one as of the other. The Nord Deutscher Lloyd, with its headquarters at Bremen, though less in the limelight and lacking a commanding personality at its head, shared in and contributed to the general expansion of commerce.

The talent for organisation exhibited in building up industrial enterprises was further displayed in regulating their relations to one another. It was not long before capitalism realised that unbridled competition was a mistake, and created machinery for its prevention. America preferred the Trust, in which the stronger unit absorbs or destroys the weaker. Germany, on the other hand, created the Kartell, in which each firm retains its individuality, accepts certain rules in regard to production, and shares in the effort to keep prices

[1] See Huldermann, *Albert Ballin* (English translation).

stable and remunerative. The Kartell was encouraged by the return to Protection in 1879, and the limitation of competition enabled the great associations to borrow capital from the banks on the most favourable terms. The tendency to concentration was most marked in the exporting trades, and by the end of the century coal and iron mining and the iron and steel industry were almost entirely syndicated. The expedient has been of great value in fostering the production of wealth by economising effort, preventing waste, and giving every member of the group a fair chance; and the manufacturing output of Germany increased more than threefold during the reign of William II. Yet the system has its critics, and its disadvantages are obvious. The tendency to unification, however legitimate and indeed inevitable, has resulted in the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few bankers and business supermen, who settle the questions of production, sales, prices, credit, new capital, interest, and wages. The domestic consumer watches in angry impotence when the omnipotent Kartell sells its goods more cheaply abroad than at home, and piles up fantastic profits. There is, moreover, no finality in the method, for the Kartell may grow into a Trust. Meanwhile the Marxian, with grim satisfaction, watches the concentration of power into ever fewer hands, and looks forward to the time when the Socialist State will complete the process of industrial evolution.

The sensational increase of national wealth rendered possible a proportionate increase of population combined with a rising standard of life. The Empire which was founded by a nation of forty-one millions counted sixty-six millions at the outbreak of the World War. The annual increase reached a total of 800,000, which was surpassed by Russia alone of European countries; but at the end of the first decade of the new century a slight diminution of pace began to be observed. Yet quickly as the population had grown, the demand for labour had kept pace with it, and in mining and agri-

culture had exceeded it. Emigration had diminished to a trickle, and immigration grew apace. A systematic crusade was undertaken against infant mortality, and the Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Haus in Charlottenburg set the standard of observation and research. New lives were welcomed, and the children were cared for when they came. In the rough tournament of the nations, man-power was one of the last weapons to be overlooked.

The national income doubled between the accession of William II and the outbreak of the war, and the working-classes shared in the upward movement.[1] The horrors of the industrial revolution were less severe in character and far shorter in duration than in England; for the factory system only took root in Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the last quarter witnessed the most generous social legislation that the world had seen. Social distress, like that of the Silesian weavers in Hauptmann's moving drama, left abiding memories behind it; but the countryside had no complaints to make so bitter as those of the English villager in the Hungry 'Forties. The working-classes, like the bourgeoisie, were accustomed to a life of laborious frugality, and the extremes of wealth and poverty were relatively rare.

The first social reformer to concern himself with the well-being of the urban worker was Schulze-Delitzsch, a native of Prussian Saxony, the founder of the co-operative movement in Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century. Though co-operative credit and purchase was denounced by Lassalle as a mere palliative, his institutions proved of real value to a poorly paid and thrifty class. Twenty years later the first Trade Unions were founded on the English model by a radical politician named Hirsch. The Hirsch-Duncker unions were and remained non-

[1] See Helfferich, *Germany's Economic Progress*, 1888–1913; Dawson, *The German Workman*; Ashley, *The Progress of the German Working Classes*; Shadwell, *Industrial Efficiency*.

party, pursuing purely economic aims and temperamentally averse to strikes. Their members were for the most part skilled workers, and their numbers were never very great. A second and larger variety were the so-called Christian Unions, which grew out of the Catholic associations in Westphalia formed under the inspiring influence of Bishop Ketteler of Mainz. The members accepted the existing political and economic order, as they accepted the authority of the Church, and regarded strikes as a last resource rather than as a weapon in social war. When, however, Marx and his disciples began to capture the town worker in the early years of the Empire, both the Hirsch-Duncker and the Christian Unions were passed in the race by the Socialist Trade Unions, which added political aspirations and activities to the limited aims of the older associations. Henceforth the story of the Unions, above all in Prussia and Saxony, is almost merged in that of the Socialist party, which believed that the only serious improvements in the condition of the working-classes were obtained by strikes and political pressure. Bitter struggles were waged with employers, some of whom boycotted Socialist workers and refused to negotiate with the Unions; but the value of association both for offence and defence was generally recognised, and the membership increased as rapidly as the Socialist vote in the elections to the Reichstag. Many non-Socialists joined the Socialist Unions on the ground that they were the most effective for their purpose; and in a country where Boards of Arbitration and Conciliation were as rare as profit-sharing there was much to be said for that contention.

The steady growth of the Socialist vote in the 'seventies, followed by the attempts on the Emperor's life in 1878, drove Bismarck to throw down the glove. But he was well aware that the movement could not be suppressed by coercion alone, and he therefore attempted to render the workers immune against the Marxian virus by a comprehensive scheme of social

reform. The Emperor's message of 1881 opened a new era in social legislation in Europe, and its principles were applied in a series of acts insuring the worker against some of the risks and disabilities of his calling. Insurance against sickness was inaugurated in 1883, against accidents in 1884, against infirmity and old age in 1889. The laws were frequently amended and extended, and not even the bitterest critic of the Government could deny the value of this triple defence against the chances and changes of mortal life. The only gap in the system was unemployment, which was to some extent dealt with by other agencies. Thanks to its operation the standard of health was raised, and the provision of sanatoria for consumptives, in connection with sickness insurance, met an urgent need.

Till Great Britain, which for long contented herself with insurance against accident, improved on the German example a generation later by the addition of unemployment, Bismarck's insurance laws placed Germany at the head of the nations in social legislation. In other respects, however, the German worker was by no means better off than his British competitor. The German factory was, as a rule, quite up to the British standard, and, owing to the late beginning of the industrial revolution, the old buildings found in parts of England did not exist; but factory legislation was less stringent, the hours of work were longer, and the half-holiday was unknown. At the close of the century the normal working-day was ten hours; and though in the 'nineties the Socialists asked first for nine hours and then for eight, they met with scanty success. Even Count Posadowsky, the sympathetic Minister of the Interior, refused to discuss the limitation of hours. The rapid urbanisation naturally led to overcrowding and high rents; but there were few slums and insanitary dwellings, and the tenements lacked at any rate the vices of age. There was also less squalid misery than in England, mainly

owing to the habits of the people. Though wages were considerably lower than in England, the general level of physique was superior, owing to the better care of children, the cleaner homes, the more suitable food, the superior skill of the Hausfrau, the habit of thrift, the lesser addiction to drunkenness and betting. England possessed both a more numerous industrial *élite* and a larger residuum of unemployables. The Marxian theory of *Verelendung*, or progressive deterioration, was disproved by the experience of rising wages, reduction of hours, increase of savings, a falling death-rate, the cessation of emigration, a larger consumption of meat, and the greatest consumption of cereals of any country in Europe. The humane system of relief by unpaid visitors, inaugurated in Elberfeld, and the Labour Colonies instituted by Pastor Bodelschwingh of Bielefeld, mitigated the distress of those who fell by the way.

Much has been accomplished for the worker; but he has also accomplished much for himself and his country. "If Germany," declared Count Posadowsky in the Reichstag in 1906, "has experienced a vast industrial expansion equalled by no other country during the same time, it is chiefly due to the efficiency of the workers." Other observers may argue that the main cause of prosperity was the brain of the scientist and the *entrepreneur*. The careful and methodical German worker expects more supervision than his mates in England or America, but the tradition of hard, steady work is more pervasive. Germany was well educated before 1870, and when trade schools and continuation schools were added, it was possible to take full advantage of them. The Technische Hochschulen and Handelshochschulen, both in the number of the students and the distinction of the teachers, are worthy of their position as the younger sisters of the Universities. With a trained working-class and a genius for organisation, German goods were bound to force their entrance into every market of

the world. When England awoke to the danger of competition in the middle of the 'nineties, some proposed to meet it by tariffs, while others suggested the study and imitation of the causes of success. More care was taken in Germany to meet the needs, the tastes, and the prejudices of customers; commercial travellers learned the language of the country they visited; catalogues were issued in the tongue, the coinage, the weights and measures familiar to the prospective purchaser. Where no detail is too small and no trouble too great, success is as inevitable as it is well deserved.

While industry and commerce, banking and shipping, had thus been making giant strides, agriculture had not been neglected. The drift to the towns was less pronounced than in England, and the rural population maintained its numbers though not its proportion. Wages rose in sympathy with the rise in industry, and the output per acre was increased by the triumphs of agricultural chemistry and the spread of technical training. Since the peasant proprietors and small farmers lacked the knowledge and capital to take advantage of all the new resources of science, the best results were reached on the large estates beyond the Elbe, where the Junkers tilled the land with energy and devotion, and large tenant farmers cultivated the domains of the Prussian State. A Prussian law of 1850 emancipated the lowest class of peasants; but on the Junker estates most of the work was performed by labourers hired for a year, housed by the employer, and therefore amenable to the Ordinance of 1810. A new disability was imposed in Prussia by a law of 1854 forbidding combinations or strikes by agricultural labourers or domestic servants, and similar ordinances were passed by the majority of German States.

Though the small farmers of the west and south were hampered by lack of capital, some compensation was found in the creation of co-operative banks. It was the achievement of Raiffeisen in the countryside,

as of Schulze-Delitzsch in the towns, to realise that collective credit was an effective substitute for private capital. Impressed by his experience of agricultural indebtedness and of the ravages of the usurer, he founded associations in which each member was known to all and reputation took the place of security. When the success of the experiment was beyond doubt, a Government subsidy was granted, and Neuwied became the centre of a network of groups which not only supplied credit, but bought fertilisers, feeding-stuffs, and machinery. The name of the Rhineland mayor stands high not only among the makers of modern Germany but among the benefactors of humanity.

While wages were rising and conditions of life improving in the towns, it was not surprising that discontent and unrest should be rife among the agricultural labourers, who derived no benefit from co-operative banks. The paid labourer, indeed, was the step-child of the State, which to some eyes seemed afraid to interfere effectively between the Junker and his men. The right of migration was of little value before the coming of railways and the abolition of guild restrictions; but in the 'fifties a stream of migration and emigration set in, which had later to be made up by the permanent or seasonal importation of Polish hands. The modest Zollverein duties on cereals lapsed in 1865, and to rural Germany the early years of the Empire were a time of growing anxiety. When the right of combination was conceded to the urban worker in Prussia in 1869, it was withheld from his country cousins, who were too timid to turn Socialist, and who were effectively excluded from all political influence by the three-class franchise and the practice of open voting. Even when the system of State-aided insurance was introduced, the rural labourer tardily and incompletely shared in its benefits.

The plight of the agricultural interest appealed to Bismarck, himself the owner of two estates. " I am an Agrarian," he declared, " not because I am a mem-

ber of a class, but because I see in the decline of agriculture one of the greatest dangers to our permanence as a State." Yet the tariff of 1879, which was followed by a great industrial revival, brought little relief to the farmers; and in 1885 the duties on rye and wheat were trebled in alarm at the growing competition of the United States, Argentine, and Russia. Sheltered behind the tariff wall, agricultural produce rose above world prices, and cheaper food became a political necessity. The rates were accordingly reduced by Caprivi's commercial treaties of 1892–4, which, however, left them considerably above the Bismarckian standard of 1879. The Agrarians were furious at the agreement with Russia, which secured a reduction of the duties on German manufactures in return for a reduction of the tariff on Russian rye, and the Chancellor fell a victim to their wrath. The Farmers' League (Bund der Landwirte) was founded to secure a return to higher duties when the Caprivi treaties should expire in 1903–4, and in Bülow, who became Chancellor in 1900, they found a zealous champion of their claims, which were embodied in, if not wholly met by, the Government Bill of 1902.

A prolonged debate on the merits of agricultural protection was waged not only in the Reichstag and the Press but in the Universities. Germany was divided into east and west, granary and workshop, country and town, producers and consumers, the one intent on high prices, the other on cheap food; but attempts were also made to raise the discussion above the level of class interest and to consider its bearing on the welfare of the nation. The case for higher duties on food was presented with remarkable power by Adolf Wagner, the veteran Professor of Political Economy at Berlin, in his work *The Agrarian and Industrial State*, with a lengthy and revealing sub-title, "The reverse side of the industrial state and the justification of agricultural protection, with special

reference to population." [1] "Our future," cried the Professor, "lies not only on the water, but also far more on the land. The preservation of German agriculture means the preservation of the German people, now and in future." The industrial evolution, he argued, had proceeded too quickly, and its effects on national life were becoming dangerous. He could not share the confidence in the ability of the country to maintain a growing population on the existing lines of urbanisation. The tendency was inevitable, but its pace and degree were subject to human control. It was not purely an economic question, but one of national character and national survival. The classical economists and their modern disciples overlooked the fact that the exclusive pursuit of markets developed the commercial spirit, the evil effects of which could be seen in the South African War. The maintenance of a large rural population, even at the cost of higher prices, was better for the physical, economic, social, ethical, cultural, and political interest of a nation than the rapid multiplication of an urban proletariat and the feverish rush of a purely industrial state, which obtained an ever-increasing proportion of its food and raw material from foreign and therefore uncertain sources. Germany required an equilibrium of agriculture and industry, not the sacrifice of the former to the latter as in England, which had become over-industrialised and whose prosperity rested on precarious foundations. It was impossible to be sure that other countries would always buy German manufactures or supply the requisite quantity of food and raw material, and in case of war the value of home supplies would be beyond price. The "bread-usurers" wished not to raise prices but to keep them steady, and in case of a bad harvest supplies could be purchased abroad.

To these arguments Professor Brentano of Munich, the veteran champion of South German Liberalism and

[1] *Agrar- und Industriestaat*, 1901. Enlarged edition, 1902.

Free Trade, and Theodor Barth, the leading champion of Free Trade in the political arena, replied that cheap food was a necessity ; that in no case could the whole community be fed on the home supply ; that Protection denoted larger profits for the great landowner and higher rents for tenants ; that taxes on bread were the worst of imposts, causing hunger and discontent, and thereby undermining the foundations of national well-being.[1] Despite these reasonings and the bitter opposition of the Socialists, the new tariff was passed and was followed by increased prices of food and land. The victorious Bülow proudly declared in 1907 that when he retired from public life all he would ask to be inscribed on his political tombstone would be the words, " He was an agrarian Chancellor." The Agrarians displayed their gratitude two years later by defeating the Government measure imposing death duties on land, and overthrowing its author. The " balance " between agriculture and industry, however theoretically desirable, was never attained. The Hansa League was founded in 1909 to defend industrial and commercial interests, and the urban workers continued their unavailing campaign against the providers of their food. Notwithstanding continual friction, however, Germany contrived to retain one-third of her population on the land, to maintain a free peasant class of six or seven millions, to produce more cereals than any country in Europe except Russia, and to head the list in potatoes and sugar-beet.

If England and the United States have grown rich in the main by individual enterprise, the prosperity of Germany was due, for the most part, to organisation, in which the initiative of the State played a leading part. In the course of a century a country with a soil below rather than above the average, and with a narrow seaboard, built up a gigantic edifice of industry and commerce and a productive agriculture by careful training and hard work, intelligently directed from

[1] Brentano, *Die Schrecken des überwiegenden Industriestaats*, 1901.

above. The habits of obedience and instinct for collective action, which helped to render the German army the strongest of fighting machines, lay at the root of the economic transformation. More methodical, more leisurely, less adventurous than America, the German reached his goal by plodding thoroughness rather than by brilliant intuitions. What personal and political liberty was to the Anglo-Saxon, order was to him. The Germany of William II was the land of experts, of statistics, of regulation, of standardisation, of consummate team-work, with closer affinities to the massive strength and material splendours of Imperial Rome than to the refined individualism and artistic subtlety of classical Greece. The World War burst upon a land which was as rich as it was powerful, which was passing Great Britain in the race, and which had won the economic hegemony of the Continent.

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CHAPTER V

THE GERMAN MIND

In her famous work, *De l'Allemagne*, the ripest fruit of her long exile, Madame de Staël painted a picture of Germany before the Wars of Liberation which was generally accepted as true to life until the iron hand of Bismarck grasped the helm half a century later.[1] The Germans, she wrote, were dreamers, good, loyal, kindly, and sincere, disinclined to war, submissive to the point of servility, slow to the verge of inertia. First they turned everything into poetry, and then they set the poetry to music. They sought to know everything and lost themselves in the void. They had indeed too much knowledge and too little experience. They were too imitative, too cosmopolitan, too lacking in realism, too devoid of national prejudices. The qualities which they lacked could only be derived from the possession of a Fatherland, for energy was only generated in free countries and powerful States. They were ripening for national independence, but were still too young for political liberty. The people would not learn for themselves, and if the nation were to awake from its slumbers a master in the shape of a German prince must come to the rescue.

This celebrated portrait of a nation of dreamers and poets, however idealised and over-simplified, was not wholly without resemblance to the original. The old Germany was poor in power and worldly goods but rich in ideals. The current of intellectual life had been rudely interrupted by the Thirty Years' War ; but the universal genius of Leibnitz conferred distinction on his countrymen, and in the middle of the eighteenth century Klopstock, Lessing, and Wieland inaugurated the Augustan age of German literature. The younger

[1] See *German Culture*, edited by W. P. Paterson ; *Germany in the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester University Series) ; Lichtenberger, *The Evolution of Modern Germany* ; Merz, *European Thought in the Nineteenth Century* ; Ziegler, *Die geistigen und Sozialen Strömungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts.*

generation, led first by Goethe and Schiller, then by Bürger and Novalis, Tieck and Schlegel, Arnim and Brentano, Uhland and Rückert, Chamisso and Fouqué, Hoffmann and Jean Paul Richter, felt the inspiration of Romanticism, while the classical revival inspired the translations of Voss and the lyrics of Hölderlin. Under the harsh yoke of Napoleon Germany learned the magic of patriotic verse from the lips of Arndt, Körner, and Kleist. The mental horizon was enlarged by Herder's studies in the evolution of humanity, by Winckelmann's interpretation of Greek art, by Wolf's Prolegomena to Homer, and by the contributions of Humboldt and Gentz to political science. In distant Königsberg, under the rude impact of Hume, Kant had discarded the facile optimism of the *Aufklärung*, and elaborated his theories of knowledge, of morals, of religion, of art, of law, and of politics in a succession of treatises as comprehensive as those of Aquinas and as enduring as those of Aristotle. The torch was handed on to Fichte, and after his early death to Schelling and Hegel, the latter of whom was to dominate the schools with his dialectical ladder, culminating in the august synthesis of Absolute Spirit. In music as in philosophy Germany reached the first place at a bound with Bach, Handel, and Glück, and outdistanced all competitors with Beethoven.

When Europe settled down to a generation of peace after a generation of war, the nation which had produced *Faust*, *Wallenstein*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and the Ninth Symphony turned its attention to science and scholarship.[1] Though Göttingen could boast of Heyne and Hugo, Heeren and Spittler, at the end of the eighteenth century, it was quickly passed in the race by the University of Berlin, founded in 1810 by Wilhelm von Humboldt, which attracted the ablest scholars from all parts of Germany. Niebuhr delivered the lectures which were afterwards worked up into the *History of Rome*; Eichhorn expounded the develop-

[1] See Gooch, *History and Historians*.

ment of Germanic institutions; Savigny explained how law, like language, grew spontaneously out of the life and needs of the people, and traced the persistence of Roman law through the Middle Ages; Böckh reconstructed the social and economic institutions of ancient Athens; and Ranke, who inaugurated the critical study of authorities in the appendix to his *Latin and Teutonic Nations*, published in 1824, founded the greatest of historical schools in his incomparable *Seminar*. At the same time comparative philology was placed upon secure foundations by Bopp and Wilhelm von Humboldt, while the brothers Grimm with loving insight illustrated the growth of the Teutonic *Volksseele* in language and literature, legend and law. Neander wrote the first full-length history of the Christian Church which combined erudition, impartiality, and spiritual insight. Otfried Müller laid the foundations for a history of Greek civilisation before he was cut off in the flower of his age. It was a time of pioneers, a second Renaissance, in which the past was unrolled like a map, and men learned to regard with critical eyes the world in which they lived.

While Germany was winning her spurs in critical scholarship, her literary laurels were beginning to fade.[1] The death of Goethe in 1832 ended the age of the Augustans, and left Heine in command of the field; and after the weary exile died at Paris in 1854 German literature bred no more immortals. Vigorous political verses were written by Herwegh and Freiligrath, Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Geibel; but Mörike alone, the gentle Swabian pastor, revived the glories of the German lyric. Scheffel's *Trumpeter of Säkkingen* won enduring success in a lighter vein, and the dramas of Hebbel lagged but a little way behind the triumphs of Grillparzer on the Vienna stage. In *Soll und Haben*, a picture of the struggle of Teuton and Slav in the eastern marches, Gustav Freytag produced the most famous of German novels after *Werther*, *Wilhelm*

[1] See Professor J. G. Robertson, *History of German Literature*.

Meister, and *Die Wahlverwandschaften*; and the foundation of the Empire inspired him to string a row of historical beads on a thread to which he gave the name of *The Ancestors*. Of equal popularity and higher merit were Scheffel's *Ekkehard*, Dahn's *Struggle for Rome*, and Ebers' *Egyptian Princess*, the three best historical novels in the German language. The generation which grew to maturity during the Empire can boast of no capital achievement in the realm of *belles-lettres*; yet the tales of Paul Heyse, the war songs of Liliencron, the social and imaginative dramas of Hauptmann and Sudermann, the problem plays of Wedekind, the historical plays of Wildenbruch, the novels of Fontane and Thomas Mann, Clara Viebig and Ricarda Huch, the lyrics of Storm, Stefan Georg, and Dehmel have won well-deserved popularity, while Reinhardt has enlarged the mechanical resources of the stage.

In the wide fields of art Germany maintained her lead in music. If Weber's operas and the *Lieder ohne Worte* are less frequently performed than half a century ago, the songs of Schumann and Brahms show no more signs of age than *Tristan*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Parsifal*. Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* went straight to the hearts of his fellow-countrymen, and few would dispute the title of Richard Strauss to the headship of the musical world to-day. Two generations sat at the feet of Joachim and Clara Schumann. The painter's brush has failed to revive the glories of Dürer and Holbein; but Menzel ranks among the giants of the latter half of the nineteenth century, Lenbach's portraits of Bismarck are as immortal as their hero, and Max Liebermann's *genre* pictures hold their own in the galleries of Europe. Sculpture can boast of Rauch, whose monument to Frederick the Great in the Linden ranks with the Wellington monument in St. Paul's, and whose recumbent effigy of Queen Luise at Charlottenburg recalls the rounded perfection of Chantrey. Max Klinger's Beethoven is a majestic creation; but the fine busts in the Siegesallee are

dwarfed by the opulent dimensions of that marble hymn to the Hohenzollerns. Architecture has lost the grace of Gothic and the classical simplicity of Schinkel, and in the Reichstag and the new Cathedral of Berlin body has triumphed over soul.

The contribution of Germany to natural science begins later than that of England and France, but during the nineteenth century she was surpassed by none of her rivals. The venerable figure of Alexander von Humboldt, who died in 1859 at the age of ninety, dominates the opening decades. The friend of Goethe and Schiller in one generation, and of King Frederick William IV in another, the explorer of the geography, geology, botany, and zoology of South America, the founder of the annual gatherings of German scientists in 1828, Humboldt gave prestige to the study of nature; and his lectures, delivered in 1827–8, and subsequently worked up into his encyclopædic survey, *Cosmos*, summarised the knowledge then available and were read all over the world. The services of Liebig, the second great name, to agricultural chemistry have already been mentioned; but his class-room and laboratory in Giessen and Munich trained an army of pupils who were to make the German chemist the best in the world. Of scarcely less importance were the crowded schools of Bunsen at Heidelberg, popularly known as the inventor of the Bunsen burner, and Ostwald at Leipzig, who broke down the barriers between chemistry and physics. In the latter field our story opens with the essay of the youthful Helmholtz, published in 1847, on the "Conservation of Energy," which, in combination with the simultaneous calculations of Mayer, Joule, and Thomson, established the law on which physical studies have proceeded ever since. Kirchhoff's discovery of spectrum analysis and the chemical composition of distant bodies was the main achievement of the 'fifties, and in later life the commanding intellect of Helmholtz explored the problems of sound. Our own time has witnessed the discovery of Röntgen's rays;

and Einstein's restatement of the laws of motion has earned him fame as the greatest of mathematical physicists, not only since Gauss and Laplace, but since Newton himself.

In physiology and medicine all roads lead back to Johannes Müller, as in history they trace to Ranke; for the Leipzig professor was no less eminent as a teacher than as a writer. After the foundations were laid, Schwann and Schleiden formulated the cell theory of plants and animals, while Virchow's treatise on Cellular Pathology revealed the body as a system of cells in continual process of change, and tracked disease to cellular disturbance and degeneration. Koch identified the tubercle bacillus in 1882, Behring discovered the anti-toxin of diphtheria in 1890, and in the opening years of the present century Ehrlich discovered the anti-toxins of syphilis and sleeping-sickness. During the later years of the nineteenth century Haeckel popularised Darwin, and studied the development of animals, Weismann disproved the inheritance of individually acquired characteristics, Helmholtz studied the physiology of the eye, and Wundt founded the study of physiological psychology in his laboratory at Leipzig.

Hegel died of cholera in 1832, and within a decade his school began to break up. The Hegelians of the Left, shepherded by Ruge and Feuerbach, rattled into materialism; and while his pupils, like Alexander's generals, were quarrelling over his inheritance, the star of Schopenhauer began to rise. *The World as Will and Representation* had been published in 1819, when the author was only thirty, and it fell stillborn from the Press; but the surly old pessimist still lived on at Frankfurt, when fame reached him in a flood after the publication of his *Parerga* in 1851 recalled attention to his name. There was indeed no room for Hegel and Schopenhauer at the same time; for while the older thinker proclaimed that the real was the rational, the younger rejected the rationality of the universe on the

ground that such a doctrine denied the overwhelming reality of pain and evil. The world, he argued, was not the expression of spirit or of reason but of will—an unconscious, purposeless, irrational force of which we are at once the products and the slaves. The will to live is implanted in us, and the supreme lesson of philosophy is that its blind efforts lead not to happiness or satisfaction but to misery. Birth is the supreme misfortune, *Nirvana* the only refuge from the torment of life. In a world of suffering and sorrow the best alleviation is in the realm of art, where we are most likely to forget the limitations of self. It is a gloomy gospel, more suited to the brooding East than to the strenuous West. Schopenhauer, alone of German philosophers, knew how to write, and his message of disillusion found ready response in the decade which witnessed the failure of the Frankfurt Parliament, the humiliation of Olmütz, and the vogue of scientific materialism. His standard was carried forward by Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, published in 1869, which, after a brief and brilliant success, lapsed into oblivion, leaving the stage free for new actors with a different tale.

If Schopenhauer ruled the third quarter of the century, the half-crazy genius of Nietzsche beguiled its closing decades. The two men were alike in their contempt for authority, their scorn of academic pundits, their command of German prose, and, above all, in their exaltation of will ; but their roads soon diverge, since the one was a pessimist, the other an optimist. The will to live, in Schopenhauer's eyes the root of all evil, is for Nietzsche the source of every joy. The elder thinker wrote in the stagnant era of the Restoration, the younger in the exuberance that followed Sedan. We must say *Yes* to life, he cried aloud, and brand as degenerates all who deny its value or challenge its claims. Creation, not acquiescence or renunciation, is our duty and our right. Copy-book maxims are out of date. A revaluation of all values is overdue, and

Nietzsche sets out to supply it. Doctrines that stimulate vitality are good, and those which discourage it are bad. Of the latter the worst is Christianity, a consolatory fiction for weaklings and degenerates, a conspiracy of the feeble against the strong. The religion of pity is a religion of slaves. Man has invented one illusion after another, and the greatest of them is God, the creation of human weakness. "God is dead," and reason is but a word. The man of genius, the Renaissance superman, the Prince of Machiavelli, is the goal of evolution. Filled with the will to live, the embodiment of Dionysian intoxication, he has no need of God, for he is a law to himself, the creator of all values. Strength is his goal, not anæmic goodness, self-realisation, not craven self-denial. The human family must labour to produce great men; that is its only task. The race is to the swift and the battle to the strong. The many must be sacrificed to the few, the stragglers to the pioneers. Such is the gospel of Zarathustra, of the zone "beyond Good and Evil," of Darwinism run to seed.

In applying these principles to the time and country in which he lived, Nietzsche surrounds himself with a host of enemies. He despises democracy as the cult of numbers, Socialism as the religion of equality. He abhors standardisation and the factors that produce it —custom, religion, law, public opinion, the State. Tradition clogs our footsteps, and history is a burden upon our backs. We are gorged with the past, which makes us objective, weakens personality, and dwarfs us into Epigoni. The schools and universities teach erudition, not culture, and they are subject to the bureaucratic State, the great Leviathan who cramps the superman and teaches the citizen to crave its aid instead of helping himself. The army is a great leveller, the Empire a huge machine. Zarathustra has no community sense, and patriotism makes no appeal. "We good Europeans" know nothing of national differences; "and what are kings to us?"

Nietzsche, who abhorred philosophical systems, had no system of his own and founded no school. Moreover, Germany had turned her back on individualism, whether Christian or Dionysian ; and the State, the Fatherland, and the Army were conceptions too firmly entrenched in heart and head to be endangered by his random blows. Yet his exaltation of the will to power, his glorification of personal prowess, his contempt for the gentler virtues of compassion and self-sacrifice coloured the thought and hardened the heart of a generation already assailed by the seven devils of materialism. Despite his ostentatious contempt for the idols of the market-place and the forum, he belongs to the age of blood and iron. The gospel of culture, of beauty, of harmony, of the moral will, taught by Goethe and Schiller, Kant and Fichte, Herder and Humboldt, was out of favour. A few voices—among them Lotze at Göttingen, Dilthey and Paulsen at Berlin, and Eucken at Jena—were raised on behalf of the old philosophical idealism ; but the German mind, like the German nation, had crossed the Rubicon. " Germany has been called the nation of poets and thinkers," lamented Paulsen, the interpreter of Kant, " but to-day it may be called the nation of masterful combatants, as it originally appeared in history." " We Germans," echoed Rein, the distinguished Professor of Pedagogy at Jena, " have ceased to be the nation of thinkers, poets, and dreamers. With the enormous increase of wealth, dark shadows have fallen on our national life. In the nation as in the individual the increase of riches is accompanied by the decrease of moral feeling and moral power." The ruling creed was the cult of force.

The tide of religious life in Germany as in other countries has ebbed and flowed.[1] The Lutheran faith stiffened into dogmatic rigidities, against which the Pietism of Spener and Francke raised a welcome

[1] See Lichtenberger, *German Theology in the Nineteenth Century* ; Goyau, *L'Allemagne Religieuse.*

protest. But Pietism in turn withered away before the critical stare of the *Aufklärung*, and never was there less religious belief than during the long reign of Frederick the Great, who announced that "everyone could get to heaven in his own way." A vain attempt to check the flood of infidelity was made by his nephew and successor; but the revival of piety in Protestant Germany begins not with the dissolute Frederick William II, but with Schleiermacher's *Discourses on Religion to its Cultured Despisers*. Religion, taught the Berlin scholar and preacher, was neither thought nor action, but feeling, above all, the sentiment of dependence. No dogma formed an essential part, for it lay beyond the sphere of definition and was therefore preserved from conflict with science or philosophy. A religion of subjective experience, emancipated from creeds and institutionalism, was Pietism in philosophic dress, and was not to everybody's taste; and though his spirit inspired scholars like Neander and Rothe, Tholuck and Dorner, the attempt to subordinate dogma inevitably provoked a counter-attempt to restore its sway. It was the ideal of Frederick William IV to be the Christian ruler of a Christian country, and in the age of Stahl orthodoxy became the road to favour and power; but the King's endeavour to impose religion by State authority failed, as his grandfather had failed before him. For in the middle decades of the century dogmatic Christianity was assailed by three new foes—the critical methods of Strauss and the Tübingen school, the scientific materialism of Büchner and Moleschott, and the rising tide of Socialism, which warred against churches and creeds no less than against crowns and capitalists. A partial reaction set in with the quasi-orthodoxy of Ritschl, and piety found practical expression in the Inner Mission of Wichern, the Rauhes Haus at Hamburg, and the Deaconesses of Fliedner; yet both the Lutheran Church and Christian belief steadily diminished in authority. At the opening of

the twentieth century a great philosophic theologian appeared in Troeltsch; but he was little read, and hundreds of thousands found in the facile neo-dogmatism of Haeckel the answer to the Riddles of the Universe.

While Protestanism has ranked as the official religion of the majority of the German people for four centuries, Catholicism has maintained a stronger grip on the minority which it commands. After touching bottom in the Century of Reason, South Germany bore her part in the second Counter-Reformation, which was inaugurated by the French Concordat, confirmed by the restoration of the Jesuits, and culminated in the Vatican Council. The glorification of the Middle Ages by the writers of the Romantic movement was accompanied by the conversion of distinguished intellectuals; and the Protestant world was startled in 1844 by the spectacle of a million pilgrims to the Holy Coat at Trier. Meanwhile the prestige of Catholic scholarship revived with the learned labours and polemics of Möhler and Döllinger, Hefele and Hergenröther, Denifle and Reusch, Janssen and Pastor, while the formation of a Catholic party in the Prussian Landtag in the 'fifties ensured a share of parliamentary power to the population of Westphalia and the Rhineland. Though no religious community can reasonably expect to increase its numbers in a sceptical and mechanical age, Catholicism has weathered the storm better than its Protestant rival, and its hold on Bavaria remains unchallenged.

No country in Europe has devoted so much thought to education in all its branches, and nowhere except in France has the control of the State over every wheel of the machine been so close and so continuous.[1] Systematic elementary education owes its origin to Wilhelm von Humboldt, and a new spirit was brought into the infants' class by the creative imagination of Froebel. Graded courses of instruction were worked

[1] See Paulsen, *German Education, Past and Present.*

out at Jena in the light of Herbartian psychology by Rein, the greatest of his disciples. The State secondary school was described with envious admiration by Matthew Arnold, himself an Inspector of Education, and the continuation school, inaugurated by Saxony in 1873, reached its highest development in our own time under the fostering influence of Kerchensteiner at Munich. While in England the upper and middle classes gave their children as much or as little education as they liked, keeping them at home or sending them to private schools at their will and pleasure, the well-to-do German child who was educated at home was examined by a State inspector like the son of an artisan. In the later decades of the century, technical education was provided for employers and workmen alike.

The crown of the stately edifice was the university, where the fees were so low that poverty was no bar to its gates, where the best students were picked out for the *Seminar*, and where the budding scholar, having written his Doctor's thesis, could start his academic career as a *Privat Docent*. Though his salary was small, the professor enjoyed a large measure of social prestige not only as a State official but as a man of mark in a community which believed in the value of his work. Though every State of the Bund and the Empire was master within its own boundaries, the example of Prussia was generally followed, and the whole nation devoted its energies and resources to creating a race of well-educated and disciplined citizens. If the English observer misses a certain elasticity and independence, the German apologist can at any rate point to the high general standard and to the distinctions achieved in every branch of learning.

In individual attainment British and French scholars of the nineteenth century were fully up to their German colleagues; but if we add quantity to quality, German scholarship must be pronounced supreme.

The invention of critical methods by a group of Berlin professors was followed by its diffusion all over the country. Mommsen reconstructed the history and institutions of Republican and Imperial Rome; Curtius painted the first picture of Greek culture in its historical setting; Droysen explored the Hellenistic age; Zeller traced the evolution of Greek philosophy, and Rohde of Greek religion; Lepsius brought order into the straggling annals of dynastic Egypt; Schliemann revealed Mycenaean civilisation; Ewald wrote the first scholarly history of the Jews; and Wellhausen, standing on the shoulders of Graf and Vatke, restored the chronological sequence of the books of the Old Testament, placing the Histories after the Prophets, and the Law after the Exile. Baur inaugurated the critical study of the early Christian Church, which after his death was carried to a high stage of perfection by Weiszäcker, Pfleiderer, and Harnack. Dahn explored the dark places of the *Völkerwanderung*, Waitz described the institutions of mediæval Germany, Giesebrecht sang the praises of the Holy Roman Empire, and the stately tomes of the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, initiated by Stein and Pertz, supplied the mediævalist with a critical edition of his sources. In the field of modern history Ranke narrated the history of the Papacy, of the German Reformation, of France and England in the seventeenth century, of Prussia till Frederick the Great, in a spirit of serene impartiality and with an almost infallible *flair* for the value of his authorities; Droysen compiled a colossal survey of Prussian foreign policy; Sybel set the French Revolution in its European frame, and recorded the foundation of the German Empire with the aid of its maker; Treitschke painted a panoramic picture of German politics and culture from the opening of the nineteenth century to the eve of the Frankfurt Parliament; Moriz Ritter devoted his life to the Wars of Religion, and Koser painted the definitive portrait of Frederick the Great.

In our own time Eduard Meyer has summarised the archæological and philological discoveries of a century in his encyclopædic survey of antiquity ; Wilamowitz has reinterpreted the life and thought of classical Greece ; Hauck has narrated the ecclesiastical history of mediæval Germany ; Krumbacher has explored the vast labyrinth of Byzantine literature ; Schmoller has founded the systematic study of economic history ; Brunner and Gierke have traced the growth of political and legal conceptions ; Meinecke has surveyed the transition from cosmopolitanism to nationalism in modern Germany. Though the proverbial thoroughness of the savant sometimes leads to pedantry and over-specialisation, the classics of modern German scholarship reveal no lack of philosophic insight or critical mastery. Nor were the jurists who prepared the Code, which came into operation in 1900, unworthy of the traditions of Savigny, Eichhorn, and Ihering.

The German people, both before and after their political unification, have conceded to their academic lights an influence unapproached in any other country. This authority has been for the most part earned and maintained by a disinterested devotion to truth ; but professors are men of flesh and blood, and it is not surprising that in the crisis of their country's fate some of them should have descended from their libraries and mingled in the noisy throng. Among the fertilisers which prepared the soil for Bismarck's plough was the group of historians known as the Prussian School. As the passionless narratives of Ranke reflect the tranquillity of the generation of peace which followed the downfall of Napoleon, so the hot-blooded triumvirate, Droysen, Sybel, and Treitschke, employed their learning and their eloquence to proclaim the historic mission of the Hohenzollerns. Its members were the political schoolmasters of Germany at a time of deep discouragement, and they braced their hearers and readers to the efforts and sacrifices needed for the creation of a mighty empire. If the

main purpose of historical research were to train a nation to action, their place among the masters of the craft would be assured; and Treitschke, the greatest of the three, ranks high among the founders of Imperial Germany.

As Fichte reflected the change from the cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century to the idealistic nationalism of the Wars of Liberation, so Treitschke's historical and political writings span the transition from the Paulskirche at Frankfurt to the Galerie des Glaces.[1] From his beloved teacher Dahlmann, a Liberal and a patriot, he learned to argue that Prussia would become the nucleus of a nation if she accepted the principles of constitutional government. On the eve of the war with Austria, Bismarck pressed the young Freiburg professor to accompany the army and write manifestos, promising him a chair at Berlin as the reward. The historian refused on the ground that he could not become a Prussian official till the Constitution was respected. But the guns of Sadowa blew his scruples into thin air, and this Saxon of Slavonic descent, now more Prussian than the Prussians, emerged as the loud-tongued prophet of centralised absolutism. Prussia, he maintained, should unify Germany by conquest, not by federation; and his *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, the most dazzling achievement of German historical literature except Mommsen's *History of Rome*, wages war with Prussia's external and domestic enemies through several thousand pages.

Treitschke's masterpiece grew under his hands to such an extent that he was unable to realise his dream of a treatise on political science; but the lectures which "the Bismarck of the Chair" delivered to crowded audiences at Heidelberg and later at Berlin carried his message all over the country and were

[1] See Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson*; and Davis, *The Political Thought of Treitschke*. The *Lectures on Politics* were translated in 1916.

published after his death. It is no longer the persuasive voice of Dahlmann or the gentle pleadings of Mill and Humboldt to which we are listening, but the stern tones of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right.* The State stands high above the individuals who compose it, and it exists to realise ideals far beyond individual happiness. To this, however, it can only attain if it is strong within and without. It is no part of its duty to inquire whether its actions are approved, since it is the guardian of national tradition and a trustee for unborn generations. Hereditary monarchy buttressed by a vigorous aristocracy is most conducive to national strength, and the executive must remain independent of the ebb and flow of opinion. In like manner the State owes no allegiance to external authority. International law is a phrase, and no tribunal can arbitrate between sovereign communities. The State must ever be ready for war, which, when undertaken for honour or supreme national interest, is wholesome and elevating ; for it is not a necessary evil but an instrument of statesmanship and a school of patriotism. Only in war for the Fatherland does a nation become spiritually united, and for a sick people it is the only medicine. It is idealism that demands it, materialism which rejects it. Talk of perpetual peace is the mark of a stagnant and decadent race, for conflict is the law of life. Moltke had declared that perpetual peace was a dream, and not even a beautiful dream ; and Treitschke agrees with him. " The hope of banishing war is not only meaningless but immoral, for its disappearance would turn the earth into a great temple of selfishness." The State is Power. All its institutions and practices must lead towards this goal. Youth must be trained to arms, and courage should be fostered by the duel. A similar gospel of virile challenge found scarcely less eloquent expression in the classical treatise of Von der Goltz, *A Nation in Arms,* published in 1883, and in Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War,* a generation later.

The Imperial system rested not only on the Prussian franchise and control of the army, but on its explicit or tacit acceptance by an overwhelming majority of the upper and middle classes. In a course of lectures on *Government and the Will of the People*, delivered in Berlin in 1913, Professor Delbrück argued that Germany possessed the best government in the world.[1] The distinguished historian of the art of war was no courtly flatterer, for in earlier years he had roundly condemned the Prussianisation of Polish and Danish minorities, and his views were as sincerely held as they were generally shared in academic circles. Defining the ideal of democracy as the realisation of the will of the people, he points out that the voters are only a portion of the community and that many who are qualified to vote make no use of their privilege. The majority, in the next place, is often little larger than the minority. Moreover, an election is less a *bona fide* expression of opinion than a campaign in which victory often falls to the party with the largest purse and the fewest scruples. Thus the discovery of the will of the people by the machinery of votes is impossible. Moreover, a popularly elected legislature in possession of supreme power falls a ready victim to corruption. Pure autocracy, on the other hand, is as mistaken as pure democracy. The weakness of the system of Frederick the Great was revealed at Jena. Contact between the Government and the people is essential, and it was to this fruitful co-operation that Prussia owed her salvation in 1813. The Reichstag, it is true, possesses far less power than other Parliaments, but quite as much as the national interest requires. What would happen to the Empire if it were ruled by changing majorities? Indignantly repudiating Liebknecht's description of the Reichstag as a mere fig-leaf to cover the nakedness of absolutism, he pronounces it a mighty organ of criticism and

[1] A translation of *Regierung und Volkswille* was published in New York in 1923.

control. Its members, he contends, influence and modify legislation more than those at Westminster. The capital fault of democratic States is that power is in the hands of a single body. The supreme merit of the German Constitution is that it is a dualism, a balance, a harmony, Princes and Reichstag playing parts of equal importance, and jointly representing the interests as well as the will of the nation.

Yet Delbrück is too honest to conceal the fact that, behind the *façade* of his vaunted dualism, supreme power is in a single hand. Sovereignty, he argues, rests with the man, or the body of men whom the army obeys. Tried by this test, sovereignty in England and France rests with the elected Chamber, in Germany with the Emperor. Prussian officers, he asserts in a passage which reveals the very soul of Imperial Germany, have always served the King rather than the State. "He is their comrade, and they cleave to him as their war-lord. That is the foundation of our national life. The essence of our monarchy lies in its relation to the army. Everybody who knows our officers is aware that they would never tolerate the rule of a War Minister drawn from the Reichstag." This attitude he fully approves, for he is convinced that democracy means not only corruption, but weakness. The governments of France, England, and the United States, he declares, in words which were soon to be put to the test, do not possess the strength, patience, or continuity to deal successfully with foreign policy or a great struggle. Thus the German Constitution, equally adapted to the requirements both of peace and war, represents the last word in political organisation and requires no change.

The finality of the Imperial Constitution was reiterated by an even more influential voice. "The German Empire," wrote Prince Bülow a year before the war in his *Imperial Germany*, "situated in the middle of Europe and insufficiently protected by Nature on the frontiers, is and must remain a military

State ; and strong military States have always required monarchical guidance. The Crown is the corner-stone of Prussia and the keystone of the Empire. The dividing line between the rights of the Crown and of Parliament is immutably fixed." While recognising that a modern monarchy needs the co-operation of the people, he pronounces against all alterations in the sphere of constitutional law. Representative but not responsible government is his ideal. He deplores the apathy of the people and the lack of feeling of responsibility shown by the members of the Reichstag ; but he proposes to deal with these evils, not by the obvious method of enlarging the sphere of popular rights, but through the spread of political education. Political talent, he laments, is not among the many great qualities of the German people, and, in particular, the parties which would profit by responsible government (by which he means the parties of the Left) are lacking in political judgment and training.

Though democratic ideas had been scouted by the governing classes since 1866, faint echoes of the Liberal gospel of 1848 were still occasionally heard. The most eloquent spokesman of the Left since the death of Eugen Richter was Friedrich Naumann, who, after an apprenticeship in the Inner Mission and a brief activity as a Lutheran pastor, had given up his Orders and entered political life.[1] As the founder of a "National-Social" group, his attitude was widely different from that of the individualistic "little England" Radicals of an older generation. He accepted the Imperial system with its army, its navy, and its colonies on the one hand, and socialism on the other, as facts which must not only be recognised but welcomed and reconciled. His demand for democratic Imperialism aroused suspicion on both sides, and the brilliant publicist and orator, who addressed his countrymen from the benches of the Reichstag and in his weekly journal *Die Hilfe*, was a voice crying

[1] See Wenck, *Friedrich Naumann.*

in the wilderness. "There is an immense capacity for development latent in the German people," he declared in his lectures on German Parties delivered in 1910, "which only awaits the overthrow of the parties of the Right. The word self-government signified in the mouth of the old Liberalism not merely a scheme of franchise but the will of every individual in his parish, in his province, in his nation, to have his share in political activity. Thus arose in Germany the great idea of a political people in which each member possesses an importance of his own. We parties of the Left must hold fast to our conviction that the idea of nationality will only reach its full height if it is saturated with the conception of free, self-governing citizenship." But the parties of the Right, to whose overthrow he looked forward, were impregnably entrenched in the institutions of his country. Liberalism was the creed of the past or the future. Governing, it was felt, like other tasks, was for the expert, not for the man in the street. The most popular alternative to the Imperial system was Socialism, and Bernstein's Revisionism attracted the moderates who had broken with Marx; but the demand of the Erfurt programme of 1891 for a transformation of the political and economic foundations of society was almost wholly confined to the manual workers of the towns.[1]

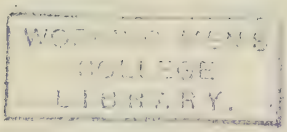
The Press has played an active part in the life of modern Germany, but it has done little to enlarge the frontiers of liberty. Though Bismarck once declared that the *Kölnische Zeitung* was worth an army corps on the Rhine, he concealed his contempt for journalists as little as for professors. Every party in the Reichstag possessed its organ—the Conservatives the *Kreuzzeitung*, the Centre *Germania*, the National Liberals the *Kölnische Zeitung*, the Freisinnige

[1] Bernstein's epoch-making book, *Die Veraussetzungen das Sozialismus*, published in 1899, appeared in English in 1909 as *Evolutionary Socialism*.

the *Vossische Zeitung*, the Socialists *Vorwärts*, while radical opinion found brilliant expression in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt*. But the voices never sung in chorus, and the deep economic gulf between the Liberal bourgeoisie and the Socialists prevented a joint mobilisation of the forces of the Left. The most influential of the monthlies, the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, under Treitschke and Delbrück, was a vigorous supporter of Imperial orthodoxy ; and the weekly *Zukunft*, founded by Maximilian Harden in 1892, was read, like *Simplicissimus*, rather for its calculated audacities and literary fireworks than for political guidance. The freedom of the Press was not unqualified, and imprisonment for journalistic heresies was not unknown ; and at critical moments most editors were glad to feed out of the hand of the Wilhelmstrasse.

In 1913 the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kaiser's accession was celebrated by the publication of an encyclopædic survey of the recent progress of the nation, with the title *Germany under William II*. Prince Bülow dealt with politics, Helfferich with finance, and every branch of activity was entrusted to a distinguished specialist. It was a sumptuous monument to an impressive achievement. The military machine was the most perfect in the world ; the High Sea Fleet was growing apace ; the widening of the Kiel Canal was almost completed ; the country was rich ; the people well educated and fully employed ; the broad clean streets of the great cities spoke of order and prosperity ; the rhythm of the national pulse was clear and strong. Germany, in the proud image of Prince Bülow, was like a well-tended garden. It might, indeed, seem, not only to the Kaiser, but to the thousands of his other readers, that Houston Stewart Chamberlain was right in glorifying the creative capacity of the Germanic race and the Protestant spirit in *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. It was a glittering vision of mind and

muscle, of large-scale organisation, of intoxicating self-confidence, of metallic brilliancy, such as Europe had never seen. Yet the country was restless, its appetite for power unappeased ; and here and there a voice was heard to ask whither it was being led, and what it would profit a nation if it gained the whole world and lost its own soul.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CHAPTER VI

THE WAR: FIRST PHASE

"THE whole of Germany is charged with electricity," reported Colonel House after a visit to Berlin in May 1914. "Everybody's nerves are tense. It only needs a spark to set the whole thing off." The spark was struck at Sarajevo on 28th June, and a month later the anticipated explosion duly occurred. No evidence, however, has appeared to indicate that the German Government or the German people had desired and plotted a world-war.[1] Both before and after the murder of the Archduke the intentions of the Wilhelmstrasse were as pacific as its policy was maladroit. The crisis demanded a statesman of first-rate ability, and it was the misfortune, no less of Germany than of the world, that the reins were in the hands of a short-sighted monarch and a weak-willed Chancellor. Germany had the same legal and moral right to promise aid to her partner as had France to assure Russia of her unchanging loyalty, and a negative reply to the request of Francis Joseph for support would have shattered the alliance. The fatal mistake of 5th July was in giving a blank cheque to Vienna. If Bethmann and his master expected Russia to look on with folded hands while the Hapsburg armies trampled her *protégé*, Serbia, under their feet, they were ignorant of the very elements of the European situation. If, on the other hand, they believed that an Austrian attack, however "defensive" in its declared intention, would almost inevitably be regarded at Petrograd as a challenge which could not be refused, it was their duty to insist on being consulted at every step of the path. Grave as had been the errors of Prince Bülow during his long rule, it is impossible to believe that he would have transferred the rudder to the hands of the rash and

[1] The best statements of the German case are in Bethmann-Hollweg, *Reflections on the World War*, and Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*. The *Kautzky Documents* were translated for the Carnegie Fund in 1924.

inexperienced Berchtold when a hurricane was brewing, and when the two Central Powers stood alone in Europe.

The German Government, which thus blindly encouraged Vienna to set the stone rolling, proceeded to reap what it had sown. Both the Chancellor and Jagow, the Foreign Minister, regarded the ultimatum to Serbia as needlessly sharp; but they had no right to complain, since they had not asked to see it. When the Kaiser read the Serbian reply, he declared that every ground for war had disappeared. This view the Wilhelmstrasse attempted to impress on the Ballplatz; but in the opinion of Berchtold and his colleagues the refusal of Serbia to admit Austrian supervision nullified her assent to the other demands. There now ensued a contest of wills between Berlin and Vienna. So far from Austria being the pawn of her ally, the German Chancellor was dragged at the chariot-wheels of his Austrian colleague, who was determined to remove the Serbian menace, and declined to be deflected from his path by threats from Petrograd, warnings from London, or appeals from Berlin. The Chancellor's telegrams at the eleventh hour are pathetic and humiliating. "We are ready to fulfil our duty, but we must refuse to be drawn into a world war through Austria not respecting our advice." It was too late. He had madly thrown the reins on the neck of a runaway steed, and it was in vain that he endeavoured to check its headlong career.

The Austro-Serbian duel grew into a European conflict when on 30th July the Tsar finally signed the decree for general mobilisation, which was answered on 31st July by an ultimatum from Berlin demanding the cessation of mobilisation, and on 1st August by a German declaration of war. In the opinion of Falkenhayn, the Minister of War, the ultimatum was overhasty and unnecessary; but the overwrought Chancellor, convinced that Russia intended to fight, supported the demand of Moltke, the Chief of the Staff, for the opening of hostilities in order to diminish the time at her disposal for concentrating her gigantic

forces. The danger of delay was obvious, for the German plan of campaign, worked out many years before, depended for success on the defeat of the French armies before Russia was ready; yet there was also the danger of forfeiting the sympathy of the world by the first declaration of war.

"With heavy heart I have been compelled to mobilise my army against a neighbour at whose side it has fought on many a battlefield," ran the Speech from the Throne delivered on 4th August. "With genuine sorrow do I witness the end of a friendship which Germany loyally cherished. The Russian Government, yielding to an insatiable nationalism, has gone to the support of a State which by its patronage of criminal attempts has provoked this war. That France has joined our opponents cannot surprise us. The present situation is a result not of passing conflicts of interest, but of years of active malevolence towards the power and prosperity of the German Empire. The White Book shows how my Government, and, above all, my Chancellor, strove to the last to avert the catastrophe. We are animated not by a lust of conquest, but by a stern resolve to maintain the position which God has given us. We draw the sword with a clear conscience and clean hands."

The outlines were filled in by a candid speech from the Chancellor.[1] Russia, he declared, had set fire to the house. He had striven to localise the Austro-Serbian conflict, but Russia had intervened, mobilising first against Austria and then against Germany. "Were we to wait till the Powers between whom we are sandwiched chose their time to strike? To expose Germany to such a danger would have been a crime. We therefore demanded that Russia should demobilise, as the last chance of preserving peace. Gentlemen, we are

[1] See Bethmann-Hollweg's *Kriegsreden*, admirably edited by Thimme. For German policy during the war, see Bethmann-Hollweg, *Betrachtungen zum Weltkriege*, vol. 2; Helfferich, *Der Weltkrieg*.

in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and perhaps are already on Belgian soil. That is contrary to International Law. The wrong we thus commit we will endeavour to repair directly our military aim is achieved. Whoever is threatened as we are, and is fighting for his all, can only consider how to hack his way through. Our army is in the field, our fleet is ready for action, and behind them stands the German people, united to the last man." The Kaiser had said that he no longer knew parties, but only Germans, and Haase, in the name of the Socialists, declared that the triumph of Russian despotism would be the end of the German people. The ban on Socialist literature in the barracks was removed; *Vorwärts* appeared on the railway bookstalls; Socialist leaders were sent on Government missions; Ludwig Frank volunteered for the front and was the first member of the Reichstag to fall; the Trade Unions stopped all strikes; and the Government promised electoral reform.

If we are to understand both the energy and the bitterness with which the German people waged war, we must realise that the version of its outbreak conveyed in the official declarations of 4th August was sincerely believed both by those who made and those who heard them.[1] Serbia, they were convinced, had been a bad neighbour to their Austrian ally; the murder of the Heir-Apparent entitled Vienna to retaliate; Germany had done her best to localise the conflict; Russia had intervened in a quarrel which did not directly concern her; Russia's general mobilisation, while the Kaiser was exchanging telegrams with the Tsar and the Chancellor was mediating at Vienna, showed her to be bent on war; Germany could not

[1] A good idea of the German mind during the war may be obtained from three series: *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit*; *Der deutsche Krieg*, edited by Jäckh; and *Schützengraben-Bücher für das deutsche Volk*. See also *Deutschland und der Weltkrieg*, 1915. E. Bevan, *The Method in the Madness*, is useful.

afford to watch the gathering of the Russian hordes while fruitless negotiations were being spun out. So far there was something like unanimity ; but the attack on Belgium gave rise to differences of opinion. While the Chancellor confessed to its illegality, a large body of opinion resented his apology, and a small group of courageous men denounced it as a wrong. In the fever of excitement, however, few stopped to think how the conscience of the world would regard the unprovoked violation of Belgian neutrality, and what long-range reactions the crime might have on the fortunes of the struggle. It was characteristic of the Chancellor's limitations that he consented to regard it as a question for the General Staff, and that the British declaration of war which followed the crossing of the Belgian frontier filled him not only with anger but surprise.

The response to the call to arms was as prompt and unreserved as in 1870. In both cases the nation girded on its armour in the full conviction that it was fighting in self-defence. The fathers had merely to hurl back Napoleon the Little, who had declared war from jealousy of the growing strength of a neighbour. The sons had to meet a world in arms, to confront the explosion of a fuse which they believed had been lighted by the authors of the *Einkreisungspolitik*—King Edward and Sir Edward Grey, Delcassé and Poincaré, Izvolsky and Sazonoff. The elder Moltke's prophecy was recalled that Germany would have to fight to preserve her unity as she had had to fight to attain it, and students of the Seven Years' War reminded their countrymen that Germans never fought so well as when their back was to the wall. An almost religious exaltation fused patriotic fervour to a white heat as "in holy wrath" the nation sprang forward to repel the envious foes who were thirsting for its destruction. The hard-worked lines of Geibel, "Und es mag am deutschen Wesen einmal noch die Welt genesen," were harnessed to a thousand perorations.

Germany was not only to win the war but to purify herself and the world in the process.

The German people looked forward to a war on land with well-grounded confidence in the bravery of their soldiers, the skill of their generals, and the efficiency of the military machine; but unless their armies could destroy the foe in a few months other weapons might well snatch victory from their grasp. The Allies were in unassailable command of the sea, and sea power was available not only for fighting and for transport, but for blockade. The economic struggle between Great Britain and Napoleon was familiar to historical students; but the power of Neptune's trident came as a shock to the Central Empires. The methodical German mind had made no preparations to meet the throttling embrace of a prolonged blockade, for the General Staff, nourished on the traditions of 1870, envisaged a short, sharp struggle. In the main articles of food Germany was almost self-sufficing, but for the supply of raw materials she was increasingly dependent on foreign sources. It was the realisation of this dependence which drove Great Britain first to modify and then to abandon the Declaration of London, and to turn the screw ever tighter as the struggle increased in fury.

An excellent cereal harvest in 1914, aided by a system of rationing and bread cards, precluded immediate anxiety on the score of the food supply; but the cessation of import of raw materials demanded instant attention. It was neither a military nor civilian official who grappled with the problem, but Walther Rathenau, a versatile mind to whom industry was only less fascinating than science, philosophy, and art. Entering the Prussian War Office a few days after the outbreak of war, he explained the need of organising supply and distribution, and was commissioned forthwith to open a Department of Raw Materials.[1] The

[1] He told his own story in a lecture, "Die Rohstoffsversorgung," reprinted in his *Reden*. Germany's economic measures during the war are described in *Handbuch der Politik* (Dritte Auflage), vol. 2.

home supply was strictly controlled, and the German chemist increased his reputation by the invention of ingenious "substitutes." As the struggle continued, Rathenau's department grew in importance; for the entry of Italy into the war in 1915, and the "rationing" by the Allies of the imports into Germany's neutral neighbours, calculated on the basis of their own consumption of food, cotton, rubber, and other necessities, threw her entirely on her own resources and on those of the territories occupied by her armies.

The sensational and simultaneous triumphs in East and West during the first weeks of the war filled the German people with a certainty of triumph which carried them through four years of toil and suffering. The dreaded Russian steam-roller was held up at Tannenberg, and the name of Hindenburg became the symbol of victory. The significance of the battle of the Marne was concealed, "Kitchener's army" was a dream of the future, and the adhesion of Turkey filled the vacuum left by faithless Italy. Under these circumstances schemes of annexation and domination spurted like a fountain from platform and press. While the Dual Alliance had entered the arena with a clearly defined programme, France bent on the recovery of the Rhine provinces, Russia on the conquest of Constantinople, Germany, like England, had to construct her programme while she fought. In both countries, accordingly, the Governments for a considerable time confined themselves to asserting that they were repelling attack, and refused all appeals for a statement of their positive aims. Their silence was interpreted to mean that they were waiting on events, and rival gospellers, deprived of authoritative guidance, proceeded to reconstruct the map at their own sweet will. The exaltation of military success was not the only factor making for an opulent programme of war-aims; for the opening months of the struggle witnessed a campaign of denunciation so fierce and so comprehensive that a ring of mutilated and tributary States might well seem

the only tolerable settlement. The war-mind, with its credulities, its hatreds, and its self-adulation, emerges unchanged in every struggle; and in examining the record of any combatant we must bear in mind that his ravings can usually be paralleled in the corresponding output of his foes.

The first authoritative presentation of the German case as it appeared to the Intellectuals was made in the answer of the Ninety-three to the charges hurled across the Rhine after the ravishing of Belgium; and the Declaration faithfully reflects the atmosphere of the time. A series of lapidary sentences, each beginning with the words "It is not true," repudiates the indictment against Germany of provoking the war and of waging it in an inhuman manner. "In form it was not happily worded," wrote Eucken some years later in his autobiography; "it was much too dogmatic and summary. Yet it was right in principle. It was the duty of the Intellectuals to sustain the spirit of the masses." The manifesto was signed by the *élite* of Germany, including such men of world-wide fame as Ehrlich, Behring, Röntgen, Ostwald, Harnack, Schmoller, Brentano, Nernst, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Eucken, Wundt, Eduard Meyer, Lamprecht, Wilamowitz, Humperdinck, Reinhardt, and Liebermann.

At the outbreak of hostilities the popular rage was directed against Russia, but when Great Britain entered the fray she became the main target of abuse. France and Russia, it was argued, had not pretended to be friends of Germany; moreover, they were Continental Powers with aims which could only be achieved by war. Against France, indeed, there was little animosity throughout the struggle. England, on the other hand, was Teutonic in blood and language; the two countries had fought side by side in the Seven Years' War and against Napoleon; and during the last two years their relations had steadily improved. Why then should she intervene in a Continental

quarrel ? Why should she stab Germany in the back ? Why should she aid the semi-savage Slav to destroy the lofty civilisation of Luther and Kant, Goethe and Beethoven ? It could only be because she was jealous of Germany's prosperity and desired to destroy a commercial rival, as she had once destroyed the Dutch. *Perfide Albion* was incorrigible, and neither Germany nor Europe would have rest till her power was overthrown.

The rabid Anglophobia provoked by the intervention of Great Britain found expression in the lyrical madness of the poets and the blasphemous ravings of the pulpit.[1] The Bavarian Lissauer was virtually unknown until the " Hymn of Hate " carried his fame all over the world.

> " Hate by water and hate by land ;
> Hate of the heart and hate of the hand ;
> We love as one ; we hate as one ;
> We have but one foe alone,—England."

The poem was distributed by Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria to his army, but " Lissauerei," as it came to be called, was less relished at the front than at the base. An anthology was published with the title, *Woe to thee, England.* " Engelland is Teuffelland." The English are the Carthaginians of the North Sea, the Judas among nations who betrays Germanism for thirty pieces of silver ; Russia is both rotten and savage, France " the harlot among the peoples." Grey has " a cancerous tumour in place of a heart." England, cried Reventlow, was the Vampire of the Continent. Against such evil-doers Germany is called to execute the vengeance of God.

In addition to the legion of amateurs the professionals contributed their share of poetical encouragement. Hauptmann, the acknowledged head of German letters, had aroused criticism by his tepid enthusiasm during

[1] See the work of the Danish Professor Bang, *Hurrah and Hallelujah.*

the centenary celebrations of 1913; but he now composed some stirring lyrics, among them his *Reiterlied*.

> " Three robbers came upon us.
> Who goes there ?
> Germany, yield your honour to us !
> Never shall we yield.
> And were you not three, but were you nine,
> My honour and country should still be mine.
> No one shall take them from us."

Dehmel, the most popular singer of the elder generation, volunteered for active service, and produced a large amount of patriotic verse. Sudermann, though more at home in drama and romance, published some vigorous songs. Otto Ernst, a brother dramatist, devoted a volume of poems to England alone. In time of war literature is almost inevitably polemical; but in *The Daughters of Hecuba*, Clara Viebig painted a poignant picture of the sorrows of wives and mothers in every land. Yet the war literature of Germany is notable rather for quantity than quality, and it has nothing to compare with the lyrics of Verhaeren, with *Le Feu*, or with *Mr. Britling sees it through*.

Among the literary sharp-shooters who trained their weapons against England was Houston Stewart Chamberlain. The moment had come for him to show his loyalty to his adopted country, and he seized it with both hands. His *War Essays*,[1] some of which appeared in an edition for the front, mirror the paralysis of the critical faculty resulting from the shock. " If there is in the world a peaceful, well-behaved, pious people," he exclaims ecstatically, " it is the Germans. In the last forty-three years not a single man in the whole country has desired war—no, not one." England, on the other hand, had desired war and brought it about. " The chief agitator was a King, the tool of a soulless, cunning diplomatist." England was no longer the land of liberty, for she was ruled by an oligarchy

[1] A translation appeared in 1915 under the title of *The Ravings of a Renegade*.

which excluded both King and people from the choice of ministers. Aristocracy was yielding to plutocracy; culture was despised; the countryside was in decay; the sway of Mammon was uncontested; the individual Englishman was honest, but the State rotten to the core; Grey was the canting apostle of peace. In Germany, on the other hand, everyone subordinated himself to the good of the whole, which was the first step to liberty. Germany, like other nations, was sick of Parliaments, universal franchise, and the flow of oratory. The country should be governed by a class standing outside and above parties and interests, not by the trivial Reichstag, that heritage of the French Revolution. "Away with English and French models!" Germany would win the war; but even a German defeat would be only a deferred victory.

If we turn from this emotional renegade to the highest ranks of the academic hierarchy, we fare little better. Some of the leading scholars of the leading German university vied with one another in the vigour of their denunciations. The alliance of England with Russia inspires Harnack with sorrow as well as anger.[1] Geibel's prophecy that East and West would one day combine against Germany was fulfilled. "But our so-called kinsfolk the English have unblushingly joined our foes. England is taking the lead in the struggle from base envy and conducting it by practical methods. We now stand, after two months of victory, in the land of the enemy, thrusting their lies back in their throats. After the final victory an extra milliard should be imposed in compensation for the lies." Addressing an audience of Americans in Berlin, the great scholar declared that "Our Kultur has been entrusted to three nations,—ourselves, the Americans, and the English. I veil my head in shame —only two are left." His verdict on England as a traitor to civilisation brought a remonstrance from

[1] Harnack's utterances on the war are collected in his book, *Aus der Friedens- und Kriegsarbeit*, 1916.

friends and pupils in England, which in turn provoked an uncompromising reply. "England cuts the dyke which has preserved Western Europe and its civilisation from the encroaching desert of Russia and Panslavism. We must hold out, for we defend the work of fifteen hundred years for all Europe and for Great Britain herself. The day that she cut the dyke can never be forgotten." In regard to Belgium, Harnack repudiates the Chancellor's confession even of formal wrong. "There is a right of necessity which breaks iron, and *a fortiori* a treaty. You chose this miserable pretext because you wished to destroy us, in order that Great Britain may rule supreme. Belgium was long ago in collusion with France and England. The responsibility is yours. The cause of the trouble is envy—envy of our fleet, our industry, and our trade."

The greatest of Hellenists controlled his tongue as little as the greatest of theologians.[1] "What have we learned of the soul of Belgium?" asked Wilamowitz. "Has it not revealed itself as the soul of cowardice and assassination? They have no moral strength within them, and therefore they resort to the torch and the dagger." Even worse than the Belgians, however, were the English. The professor pities the Russians, as he would pity a flock of sheep led to the slaughter. The French, again, were forced into war by their ruling caste. England was the true villain of the piece. "Here we have the prime mover, the evil spirit which has conjured up this war from hell, the spirit of evil and the spirit of hypocrisy." No less violent was the onslaught of Eduard Meyer, the distinguished author of the *History of Antiquity*. Turning aside from his learned studies of the ancient world, he compiled a book during the first winter of the war, entitled *England*. A perfunctory survey of the wars and diplomacy by which the British Empire was created is followed by a declaration of perpetual war against the arch-enemy who was responsible for the

[1] *Deutsche Reden in schwerer Zeit.*

conflict. However it ends, he declares, the main factor in the life of Europe will be the unbridgeable antagonism and embittered hatred of England and Germany. "We Germans will never forget what England has done to us. The era of internationalism is over and will not revive. We Germans have long enough nursed the delusion that it is possible to win the friendship of other nations by peaceful *rapprochement*. The veil has fallen from our eyes." The professor is less confident of victory than some of his colleagues. If the Entente wins, Europe and Asia will fall under the yoke of Russia, and where the Russian boot treads, all true culture and freedom are annihilated. In any case the future would witness the intensification of national struggles and the frequent recurrence of war.

The greatest of jurists, a veteran of seventy-four, who had fought in the war of 1870, flung himself into the fray with the ardour of youth. Germany's love of peace, declared Gierke in an address on *Krieg und Kultur*, was notorious. Yet war was not only the great destroyer but the great architect. The progress achieved after 1871 aroused the envy of her neighbours, who leagued themselves together in the infamous attempt to strangle her, urged on by the degenerate shopkeeper soul of England. "Storm on with thy Slav and Gallic accomplices, thou low-minded nation. Thou shalt never falsify the judgment of God, perfidious Albion." Yet the conflict which had been unloosed for Germany's destruction would lead not only to material victory but moral regeneration. "Before 1914 we were losing our blessings owing to party discords, socialist hostility to the monarchy, frivolity, and other causes. The war wrought the great miracle; the German nation found itself again. This conversion to the Fatherland was also a conversion to God. France, morally debased and decadent, Russia with her knout, and England with her treacherous robber politics will be reduced to such a condition that they

will never dare even to snarl at Germany again. Then there will be a new dawn; German Kultur will unfold itself purer and lovelier than ever; the whole world will stand open to us. But to reach this goal we must completely overthrow the most cunning and infamous of our enemies."

A psychological solution of England's misdeeds was offered by Sombart, the eminent author of *Modern Capitalism*, in a volume with the alliterative title *Händler und Helden* (Traders and Heroes). The professor dedicates his work "To you young heroes facing the foe," and adds that it will tell them where to all eternity the enemy of Germanism is to be found. All wars, he argues, are wars of belief. The present struggle is between the trader and the hero, or rather between the spirit of the one and the spirit of the other. The core of the Englishman's nature is immeasurable intellectual narrowness, the inability to rise an inch above tangible "reality," as a glance at their philosophers from Bacon to Spencer will prove. The trader regards life as a series of business transactions, and has no use for culture. Scientific thought is completely commercialised. The twin idols, comfort and sport, have destroyed the last remains of intellectual life. The British Empire is the offspring of a purely mercantile spirit. The mother country is a great business house, with the colonies as branches. Commerce was the cause of all England's wars, for she only fights for commercial interests. The virtues of the hero, on the other hand, are sacrifice, loyalty, bravery, obedience. Nowhere is the difference between the two ideals and the two nations more obvious than in regard to war. "We hold the objects of war to be sacred and do not misuse it, like the trader peoples, to defend empty opulence." The professor concludes on the note struck by Gierke. Before the war the commercial spirit was conquering the world. This danger was now removed by the struggle, and the old hero spirit was reborn in its purifying fires.

If leaders of German scholarship permitted themselves such extravagances, it is no wonder that the lesser stars followed their example. "Never in history has there been anything so perfect as Germany," declared Professor Lasson, a faithful disciple of the Treitschke-Bernhardi religion of war. The aged Haeckel announced from Jena that the English were the greatest criminals in history. But though almost every German of distinction shared the view that Germany had been attacked, many scholars of the highest rank, such as Delbrück, Meinecke and Deissmann at Berlin, Tröltsch and Oncken at Heidelberg, Schulze-Gävernitz and Michael at Freiburg, Arnold Meyer at Kiel, Keutgen at Hamburg, carried on the controversy with as much courtesy as a state of war permits. Nelson fearlessly preached the unity of civilisation to his pupils at Göttingen, and Einstein remained an impenitent citizen of the world.

While the world was shuddering at the burning of Louvain and the *battue* of Dinant, Germans described to one another the horrors of the Russians in the East and the savageries of the Belgians in the West. On one side of the long battle-line it was believed that German soldiers cut off the hands of Belgian children, on the other that Belgian civilians gouged out the eyes of German warriors. The Bryce Report on German atrocities in Belgium was as unknown to readers beyond the Rhine as the German White-Book issued in reply to its charges was unknown in London and Paris. Each country accused its enemy of atrocities on the field of battle and of cruelty to defenceless prisoners, while priding itself on its superior humanity both at the front and behind the lines. Germany echoed with the story of the *King Stephen*, the *Baralong*, and the bombing of a children's procession at Karlsruhe, while the Anglo-Saxon world sickened at the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the attacks on hospital ships. Different versions of such incidents inevitably produced different judgments. Germany was informed,

for instance, that Nurse Cavell was a spy, and that the *Lusitania* was an auxiliary cruiser, armed with guns and carrying ammunition for the Western front. It is incorrect to assert that the German people approved atrocities, for they refused to believe that they had been committed. The world-wide outcry against German methods of waging war was attributed to the material fact that the Entente was in possession of the cables.

The first detailed reply to these charges came from Ernst Müller-Meiningen, an influential member of the Reichstag and a trained jurist, in *The World-War and the Collapse of International Law*.[1] The book consists of a string of denials and counter-charges. Belgium had broken her pact of neutrality; the *Lusitania* was an auxiliary cruiser and received a warning; the Allies had violated the Congo Act which excluded the Congo basin from military operations; they employed savages; they violated the rules of the Red Cross; the Belgians engaged *francs-tireurs*; the German wounded were butchered and mutilated. Such is his answer to the question, "Who are the Huns?" Stories of German atrocities, on the other hand, are pronounced to be exaggerated or altogether baseless.

While the war of tongue and pen raged fiercely, cooler brains were busy elaborating a programme of victory. The refusal to surrender an inch of German soil was axiomatic. There were few who did not desire some extension of frontiers, either as a reward for the blood shed in conquering them or as a bulwark against future attack; but on coming down to details wide differences of opinion were revealed. It was, for instance, generally agreed that Belgium could not be unconditionally restored; for had not documents been found in Brussels recording military conversations with British officers, and, indeed, military

[1] An abridged translation under the title of *Who are the Huns?* was issued in Berlin in 1915 for the benefit of Americans.

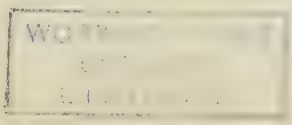
conventions in the years before the war? Should, however, the whole country be annexed? or only the district of Liège? Should the dynasty be restored subject to guarantees that the country would not serve as a "sally-port" for an attack on Germany? "The land on every foot of which German blood has flowed is hallowed," cried Stresemann. "All agree that Belgium must in some way be joined to the old home." In June 1915 the King of Bavaria declared that Germany must have a direct outlet from the Rhine to the sea.

No less divergent were the views concerning the mineral districts of north-eastern France. While the Tirpitz school clamoured for the Belgian coast, the great Industrialists cast longing eyes on the iron beds of French Lorraine. In 1871 the frontier had been unwittingly drawn through the middle of the richest iron district in Europe. In the opening days of the World War the German armies had seized the precious strip, and its resources made victory possible if not indeed secure. Was this treasure-house to be restored at the peace, and were the coal-mines of the north-east corner to remain in French hands? The question was answered in the memorial to the Chancellor put forward in the spring of 1915 by the Six Economic Associations, representing German agriculture and industry and politically identified with the Conservatives and National Liberals. The demands included the retention of Belgium, the annexation of France to the Somme, the Briey mines, Verdun and Belfort, parts of the Baltic provinces, adequate colonies, and a sufficient indemnity. The Chancellor returned an ambiguous answer; but it was asserted by his friends that he was opposed to them, and that in his formula of "guarantees" there was no hint of annexations.

A third demand was embodied in the attractive phrase, "the Freedom of the Seas," to which, however, a variety of interpretations was attached. It was

universally desired to strike at the domination of the British fleet, whose suffocating embrace was beginning to be felt in every household. Since no one could deny that the sea was free in time of peace, the demand could only apply to times of war. To jurists it meant the abolition of the right of capture of private property, but to the average citizen it conveyed a far wider meaning. Germany, it was felt, must be strong enough to prevent England closing the seas to German commerce. The chief spokesmen of this ideal, such as Tirpitz and Reventlow, who deplored the breach with Russia, argued that the grand prize of the war was supremacy at sea ; that Germany could never be rendered self-supporting ; and that she must therefore take precautions, such as holding the Belgian coast, to prevent another blockade.

There had been Easterners and Westerners, Russophobes and Anglophobes, before the war, and the rival schools continued their feud throughout the conflict. While Westerners urged the annexation of Belgium, the spoliation of France and " the Freedom of the Seas," Easterners looked forward to reconciliation with England and France and regarded the struggle mainly as a duel between the Teuton and the Slav. In the west, where racial and political frontiers to a large extent coincided, annexations, they argued, would perpetuate the conflict. In the east, on the other hand, lived a litter of peoples who had fallen under the Muscovite sway. The land in the Baltic Provinces was still to a large extent in the hand of German barons whose ancestors, the Knights of the Cross, had wrested them from heathenism in the Middle Ages. Poland, again, might with advantage be severed from Russia and linked by dynastic or other ties to the Central Empires. Here, then, argued the Easterners, was a field in which Victory might indulge her appetite without outraging the sentiments of the Western peoples, or annexing an acre of old Russian soil.



Midway between the Western and Eastern school stood Naumann, whose *Mitteleuropa* [1] was planned in the spring of 1915, and published in the autumn. The most important book written in Germany during the war attracted world-wide attention by its argumentative power and by the skill with which the thesis was worked out, while its unfailing urbanity commended it to thoughtful readers at home and abroad sickened by the polemical violence of rival controversialists. It is a grave political treatise, discussing in calm tones not the peace settlement alone but the future of Europe. The grand lesson of the war, he argues, is that the day of small and even moderate-sized States is over, and that only large units can survive. Size is necessary for political independence and economic self-sufficiency. A blockade could only be parried by a large productive area, such as the British or the Russian Empire. It was necessary to think in continents. Germany was too small a unit and so was Austria; but in pooling their possessions they might find safety. A Middle Europe was a necessity and could alone justify the bloodshed of the war, for it alone could ensure the security and, indeed, the survival of the German nation. Lagarde had sketched a mid-European Empire stretching to Trieste and the Black Sea, and Bismarck had laid the foundations in 1879. The great resolve could only be taken in war, when the sense of danger broke through the tyranny of custom and tradition. "We shall emerge from the war as mid-Europeans."

Passing to details, Naumann asks for a loose federal union in which the central power would control the military and economic resources of its members. *Mitteleuropa* would begin with Germany and Austria, though it was hoped that it might attract other States. The German publicist is careful to preserve the dignity

[1] A translation, with Introduction by Professor Ashley, appeared in 1916. Over 100,000 copies of the original were sold.

of the weaker partner by Joint Commissions; but the idea at the back of his mind was an association under German guidance, vitalised by German capital and German brains. Though the non-German races of the Hapsburg Empire might not approve of such intimate union, they would be compelled to enter by the fear of isolation which must henceforth haunt the dreams of little States. The corn of Hungary would be needed to fill the State granaries of which the war had shown the necessity, and the Kingdom of St. Stephen could never survive alone as a powerless neighbour of Russia. It was a grandiose conception, which secured a large measure of German assent, and appealed to those who were opposed to the policy of annexations; but it presented too large a surface to escape attack. German Austria had no wish to be patronised and modernised by Berlin; Slavonic Austria abhorred the notion of Teutonic hegemony; and the Magyars dreamed of wider liberties, not of closer partnerships. In Germany itself the navalists resented a project which distracted the public eye from the North Sea; and pacifist Socialists such as Kautzky and Ledebour argued that an economic *bloc* would inevitably conflict with its rivals. Middle Europe never materialised, but even the name frightened the Entente Powers into the Paris Resolutions.

If *Middle Europe* embodied above all the will to live, *Berlin-Bagdad* voiced the desire to expand. Starting from Naumann's premise that the future lay with World-States, the builders of the Bagdad railway maintained that Germany could counter her mighty rivals by controlling a far-flung belt from the North Sea to the Indian Ocean. The entrance of Bulgaria into the war and the conquest of Serbia in the autumn of 1915 opened a direct path to the East, and expresses to Constantinople were soon running through territory entirely in the possession of the Central Powers and their allies. The line to Bagdad was not completed; but the rails had been laid across Asia Minor, the Taurus

Mountains were being pierced, and a welcoming arm stretched northwards from Bagdad to Samara. Here was a glittering vision of dominion and wealth, against which the envy of rivals on sea or land would beat in vain.

The most eloquent preacher of the Bagdad gospel was Rohrbach, a widely-travelled and scholarly publicist whose *Germany among the World Peoples* and *The German Idea in the World* had stimulated interest in colonial and economic expansion in the last years of peace. No pen was busier during the war, and his review *Greater Germany* focussed attention on the prizes of the gorgeous East. Like most of his countrymen, he descried the principal enemy across the North Sea. France, he wrote in 1914, would lose nothing in Europe and little in North Africa, though she would be punished financially. Russia would lose her non-Russian provinces. "Our real enemy, and not only ours but the enemy of European culture, which for its own commercial profit was willing to deliver Germany to Russia and to destroy 'the German idea in the world,' is England. No peace can be made with England till her power for harm is for ever destroyed." She must be attacked, he added in a pamphlet in 1915, on land. "To attack England in Egypt is to transfer the decision from sea to land. If she retains Egypt, she remains the greatest of World Powers. If Egypt falls, it matters little what else she loses. If Egypt falls, India trembles. The power and prestige of England are anchored in the Suez Canal. If England can break the alliance between the Central Powers and Turkey, English world-power is saved; if not, she can never again meet Germany on equal terms." If a powerful Turkey emerged, echoed Delbrück, England would lose Egypt and the Canal, the main artery of her Empire. The deadlock in the West throughout 1915, coupled with the catastrophic defeat of Russia and the failure of the British attack on the Dardanelles, increased the number and influence of the Easterners, and stimulated the map-makers to ever more daring flights of fancy.

A final aspiration was for an overseas empire commensurate with the rôle of Germany as a Great Power. "Our first demand at the peace," wrote Delbrück in 1915 in his little book *Bismarck's Heir*, "will be for a great colonial empire, a German India, big enough to defend itself in war, consisting of the Belgian and French Congo and English tropical Africa. If that is not enough, we can develop Turkey with capital and advice. Turkey needs a European schoolmaster, and can only find him in Germany." The professor had argued for many years that Germany was entitled to "compensations" for the enormous expansion of the French and British dominions in Africa, and he now saw his chance of attaining his goal. The rapid loss of all the colonies except East Africa was no surprise to a people who had realised the meaning of sea power, and it was well understood that their fate would be determined on the battlefields of Europe. The heroic resistance of Lettow-Vorbeck in East Africa kept alive interest in the colonies and confidence in their recovery. Kiao-Chau, it was admitted, was lost beyond recovery, and few tears were shed over the Pacific islands, since it was felt that the colonial empire had been too scattered and that tropical Africa was the Promised Land.

The most distinguished of German statesmen took his share in the great debate, and joined the ranks of the annexationists. Prince Bülow's *apologia*, which had originally formed part of a co-operative work, appeared in the spring of 1916 as a separate volume under the title of *German Policy*. But the times had changed, and the work had changed with them. The unruffled urbanity remains, and he has nothing to say of jealous conspirators or of the wickedness of England. Moreover, he gently hints that "we should not recommend our Kultur to others too often or too emphatically, nor proclaim ourselves the leaders of civilisation." The new version is less of a defence of his administration, and more of a pæan to his countrymen. A new chapter on "Militarism" repudiates the caricature of

a nation in bondage to an aggressive military caste, and hails the army as the embodiment of the unity of the Empire, the State, and the People, the chief instrument by which the nation was made and maintained, the organism in which political, social, and religious differences were overcome. How truly national was the army was shown when at the outbreak of war the Socialists fell into line. The chapter devoted to his old antagonists in the first edition is replaced by a new chapter hailing their conversion to national ideals, and foretelling more harmonious relations with them. In its unanimity and its prowess the nation had exceeded even the loftiest hopes.

The nation, declared the Prince, required all its strength not only to meet a world in arms but to maintain its existence after the struggle. Germany would emerge victorious and with augmented strength, and the settlement must secure her not only adequate compensation but guarantees against the recurrence of the ordeal. The future would be a time of even greater danger and tension than the past, and she must henceforth trust to herself alone. "Germany will in future require protection against hostility and desire for revenge, both old and new, in the West, the East, and beyond the Channel; and such protection can only be found in the increase of her own power. Our enemies will also strengthen their armaments on land and sea. We must see to it that our frontiers and shores are rendered less easy of attack, not in furtherance of that desire for world dominion with which we are falsely credited, but for the maintenance of our present position. The outcome of the war must be positive, not negative. The mere restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* would mean for Germany not gain but loss. Only if our power, political, economic, and military, emerges so strengthened that it considerably outweighs the feelings of enmity that have been aroused, shall we be able to assert with a clear conscience that our position in the world has been bettered by the war."

While busy brains were counting their chickens before they were hatched and dreaming of a future based on old principles of *Realpolitik*, a small group of men, in Germany as in other belligerent countries, looked beyond the immediate issues of victory and defeat, and planned far-reaching schemes for saving the world.[1] All of them condemned the violation of Belgian neutrality, and some of them held the Central Powers wholly or mainly responsible for the war. Most were scholars, and some were already well known for their pacifist activities before the war. All of them believed that civilisation could only be rescued by a new order of ideas. Forming themselves into the *Bund Neues Vaterland*, which met for the first time in August 1915, in a Berlin hotel, they looked forward to a compromise which would leave every belligerent disillusioned. The influence of German pacifists during the struggle was as slight as those of their comrades in other lands; but such men work for the future, and their seed was later to be ripened by hunger and defeat.

To no German did the war come as a more poignant personal blow than to Professor Sieper, whose studies in English literature and frequent visits to England had made him a beloved and familiar figure in our midst. The Munich scholar had successfully inaugurated a series of German monographs on different aspects of English civilisation, which were to be followed by a corresponding series of English studies of German culture. The war, which he had done his utmost to avert, broke his heart, and he died while the conflict was at its height. If Professor Sieper was the most active of Anglophils, Professor Quidde was the most prominent of pacifists. As a young historian he had won sudden fame in 1894 by the publication of a brochure on Caligula, in which, without mentioning modern names, the reader was pointedly reminded of the extravagances of William II. The pamphlet sold by scores of thousands; but the author had the courage to lecture

[1] See Wehberg, *Die Führer der deutschen Friedensbewegung.*

not only the Kaiser but his fellow-subjects. In 1893 he had published a pamphlet entitled *Militarism in the German Empire, an Indictment*, and in the following year he founded the Munich branch of the German Peace Society. A leading figure in Peace Conferences and meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an active worker for the Berne Peace Bureau, and a member of the Bavarian Landtag, Quidde's voice had been constantly raised in favour of an arrest of armaments. He anticipated the verdict of history in dividing the responsibility for the war, and in a series of pamphlets argued the inferiority of annexations to real guarantees.

No German pacifist speaks with higher authority than Professor Walter Schücking, whose juristic studies won him a chair at Marburg at an early age. Like Quidde, however, he felt the need of addressing an audience beyond the walls of his classroom, and boldly attacked the policy of the Government in the Polish provinces. At the same time he traced the successive attempts for " the organisation of the world " from the Roman Empire to the Hague Tribunal, concluding with a confession of faith in the future of arbitration and disarmament. He was one of the few German scholars who both studied and approved the work and ideals of the Conference of the Hague. During the war he laboured unceasingly, so far as the censorship allowed, for a peace by understanding, and urged the necessity not only of a new spirit but of new international institutions. No teacher of international law in Germany or elsewhere has done more to relate his science to the needs and hopes of the age. Approaching the problem from the same juristic point of view, Hans Wehberg, joint editor of the *Zeitschrift für Völkerrecht* and a specialist on maritime law, reached the same general conclusions as Schücking.[1] He condemned the ultimata to Serbia and Belgium, urged the solution of the problem of Alsace-Lorraine by a plebiscite, and argued

[1] See Wehberg, *Als Pazifist in Weltkrieg*.

for a peace without victory as the best foundation for an international organisation. Indeed, after the intervention of President Wilson, he believed an Entente victory to involve less danger than that of the Central Powers, since the triumph of Prussian militarism would automatically prevent the creation of any international edifice. Like other members of the *Bund Neues Vaterland*, he was shadowed by the police, and was finally ordered to serve in the Landsturm.

No figure among German pacifists excited so much interest abroad as that of Professor Förster, whose writings and addresses on moral, social, and educational problems had for many years been directed against the materialism which he believed to threaten the soul of his countrymen. At an early age he chose the vocation of a lay-preacher, in which his life has been spent. He held Germany, or as he preferred to say, Prussia, almost wholly responsible for the war, and his detestation of militarism led him to attack the work of Bismarck himself. In 1916 he published an article in which, repeating the complaints of Constantin Frantz, he regretted that the German people, which inherited such great spiritual traditions, had been led astray by the worship of *Machtpolitik*. At this and other utterances the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Munich protested, and Förster was compelled to resign his chair. But he continued his campaign by tongue and pen,[1] boldly reproving self-glorification and hatred of the enemy. As an old friend of England, he reminded his countrymen that England was the mother not only of Sir Edward Grey, but of Carlyle and Ruskin, Florence Nightingale and General Booth. "Do not let us be Pharisees," he cried. The doctrine that war improves the character of a nation fills him with anger. He was convinced that a new world order required a religious foundation, —not merely the shaping of a new code, but the acceptance of a new ethic. Imperial Germany, he

[1] See *Die Deutsche Jugend und der Weltkrieg*.

thought, rested on the doctrine of power, and the first step towards a new spirit was to recognise the falsity of this basis. It is not indifference to his country but love of its finer traditions that drives him to attack the idols of the market-place. "The more sincerely we love our own people, and the more we wish for it that which alone has worth, the more shall we suffer from all blots on its honour, and the more shall we seek to counterwork a state of mind which threatens to jeopardise its present and future position in the world."

The little band of academic pacifists was enlarged by the adhesion of Nicolai, Professor of Physiology at Berlin. The Manifesto of the Ninety-three moved him to draft a reply in co-operation with Einstein and Wilhelm Förster, Professor of Astronomy at Berlin, and father of the well-known publicist. The war, it declared, would scarcely end in victory for either side. Whatever the result, men in all countries must do their best to prevent the conditions of peace becoming the germ of future wars. Europe was in the melting-pot, and it should emerge as an organic whole in order to protect its soil and civilisation. For this purpose there should be a Union of Good Europeans. This manifesto was privately circulated; but though it brought its author some sympathetic letters, few were willing to sign. The project was dropped; and Nicolai announced a course of lectures in 1915 on War as a biological Factor in Evolution. At this point he was called up as a doctor; but his outspoken criticisms of the attack on Belgium, the use of poison gases, and the sinking of merchantmen led to his detention in the fortress of Graudenz. His enforced leisure was employed in writing his massive treatise, *The Biology of War*,[1] which was smuggled over the frontier and published in Switzerland. After tracing the fighting instinct through history, he concluded that there is no biological advantage in war,

[1] A translation appeared in 1919.

which was as evil and as needless as smallpox and plague. The work ends with a plea for a society of nations. "Just as our forefathers, in advance of their time, advocated a united Germany, so do we intend to fight for a united Europe." The publication of the book led to harsher measures, from which he escaped in an aeroplane to Denmark in 1918.

The censorship of the press was as strict in Germany as elsewhere, and criticism of the war and the war spirit was almost entirely confined to Socialist organs. The most active champion of pacifist ideas in the bourgeois press was Hellmut von Gerlach, a Junker by birth, who had entered the Civil Service in early life. Finding the self-suppression of an official career uncongenial to his active mind, he entered the Reichstag as a Democrat and edited a weekly journal, *Die Welt am Montag*. Throughout the war he fearlessly expressed in his paper his desire for a compromise peace and for the democratisation of the political system both in Prussia and in the Empire. Approaching the problem as a realist, not an idealist, Gerlach appealed rather to reason than to conscience, and exposed the folly rather than the wickedness of war.

During the first two years of the struggle, reputations were lost and won in the field and at home. The defeat of the Marne ended Moltke's career, and Falkenhayn, the Minister of War, reigned in his stead. The new Chief of the Staff was a capable and energetic soldier; but his fame was completely eclipsed by that of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who had struck down the Russian colossus. On the failure of the Verdun attack in 1916 his days were numbered, and the great twin brethren were called to the helm amid the plaudits of the nation. The Supreme War Lord was wise enough not to interfere with problems of strategy, and after the first exaltation was past his figure receded into the background. The Crown Prince fulfilled his duties as an officer, but exerted little influence at the front or at the base. The inaction

of the fleet, which he bitterly deplored, diverted the limelight from Tirpitz, who lost his place before the Battle of Jutland tested the weapon he had forged. The hopes of a beleaguered people were centred not in the battleships which were his pride, but in the submarine arm which he had relatively neglected.

The Chancellor, like his master, was condemned to play second fiddle to the Generals. His character continued to command respect, and his speeches in the Reichstag displayed unexpected vigour; but he fought a losing battle, since he enjoyed the confidence neither of the Right nor of the Left. The former clamoured for a stronger man and a stiffer programme, while the latter resented his timid refusal to repudiate the annexationists. He remained in office because there was no obvious candidate for his post except Prince Bülow, whom the Kaiser had been glad to employ in Rome when Italy was trembling on the brink, but to whom the Wilhelmstrasse was irrevocably barred. Jagow, the Foreign Minister, was little more than a clerk, and soon resigned his place, which was filled by the Under-Secretary, Zimmermann, a man of more energy than discretion. The strongest member of the Government was Helfferich, who financed the struggle almost exclusively by long-dated loans, and cheerfully foretold that Germany would emerge from the conflict surrounded by a ring of tributary States.

The Reichstag met at intervals, without attempting to share in the direction of the war. The *Burgfriede* of 4th August was maintained for a time, but the Socialists soon became restless.[1] *Vorwärts* had censured the ultimatum to Serbia as sharply as any Entente newspaper, and mass meetings had called upon the Government to keep out of war. But the Russian mobilisation on all fronts and the presence of Russian troops on German soil had altered the situation when the party met on 3rd August to decide its attitude towards the voting of credits on

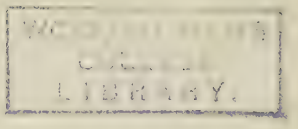
[1] See Bevan, *German Social Democracy during the War*.

the morrow. Fourteen members, including Haase the Chairman, favoured refusal; but in accordance with precedent the declaration of the whole party was determined by the majority vote of seventy-eight. In the Prussian Landtag the little band of ten was equally divided. The Minority was encouraged to assert itself by Kautzky, the most honoured figure in the ranks since the death of Bebel. When war credits were again demanded in December 1914, Karl Liebknecht, the *enfant terrible* of German Socialism, voted against them in defiance of party discipline. At the third demand, in April 1915, Liebknecht and a colleague voted against the credits, while the Minority, which had now grown to thirty, left the Chamber before the voting took place. The Majority, captained by Ebert, Scheidemann, and David, reiterated its resolve to stand by the country and expressed its wish for a peace without annexations. The Minority, led by Haase and Bernstein, Liebknecht and Ledebour, argued that the struggle had become a war of conquest which no Socialist should support. At the end of 1915 the Minority insisted on voting against the credits, and Ebert succeeded Haase as Chairman of the Parliamentary party. The controversy was fought out in the Press; but the Majority received the steady support of the Trade Unions under the leadership of Legien. One or two of the party publicists, including Lensch and Cunow, openly renounced their principles and joined in the demand for annexations.

The final split occurred in the spring of 1916, when Haase announced in the Reichstag that he and his followers opposed the continuance of the war. When the Majority declared that they had forfeited their rights of membership, he formed a separate group of seventeen with himself and Ledebour as joint chairmen. The larger section of the dissentient Minority remained for a time in nominal communion with the Majority. Liebknecht, on the other hand, found even Haase's pace too slow. In the Reichstag, in the Landtag,

and in the *Spartacus Letters*, which circulated secretly in typescript, he denounced both the Government and his old associates in language of unmeasured violence; and when, on May Day 1916, he shouted in the Potsdamerplatz, "Down with the war, down with the Government," he was arrested and imprisoned. The difference between Majority and Minority was that the former were Germans first and Socialists afterwards, while the latter were Socialists before they were Germans.[1]

[1] Liebknecht's speeches were published in New York in 1919 under the title *The Future belongs to the People.* Cp. Schumann, *Karl Liebknecht.*



CHAPTER VII

THE WAR: LAST PHASE

After two years of war, though there was no reason whatever to anticipate defeat, the civilian heads in Berlin and Vienna began to realise that a decisive victory was improbable, and that it might be wise to explore the possibilities of peace. It was suggested by Burian, who had succeeded Berchtold at the Ballplatz, that the Central Powers and their Allies should lay their cards on the table. The German Chancellor, who had never been dazzled by military success, favoured the plan of approaching the enemy; but he vetoed the notion of a public declaration of terms, on the ground that the offer of a compromise, unless it brought peace in its train, would dishearten a people attuned to the loftiest expectations and prepared for further sacrifices to attain them. It was therefore agreed that the four Allies should invite the Entente to a discussion as soon as Roumania, who had entered the struggle on 28th August 1916, received a decisive defeat. Meanwhile the hands of the Government were strengthened by the Auxiliary Service Bill, which compelled all male citizens between seventeen and sixty to perform duties required by the State.

On 12th December, a few days after Austro-German troops entered Bucharest, the Chancellor forwarded a brief Note to the enemy Powers. The latest events, he declared, proved that the resistance of the Central Powers was unbreakable; but they did not seek to annihilate their adversaries, and they proposed negotiations. "They feel sure that the propositions which they would bring forward would serve as a basis for the restoration of a lasting peace. If, notwithstanding this offer of peace and conciliation, the struggle should continue, the four Allied Powers are resolved to carry it on to the end, while solemnly disclaiming any responsibility before mankind and history." The news was conveyed to the troops in a flamboyant Army Order drawn up by Ludendorff,

to whom compromise was anathema. "Soldiers! in the consciousness of victory which you have won, the rulers of the Allied States have made an offer of peace. We shall see if the object is achieved. Meanwhile you have with God's help to stand fast against the enemy and defeat him." Such phraseology was more calculated to keep up the courage of the people than to pave the way to negotiations; and, indeed, the believers in integral victory, in Germany as elsewhere, were the sworn foes of secret conferences with the enemy.

The Entente replied that a mere suggestion of negotiations was less an offer of peace than a manœuvre. The situation called for penalties, reparation, and guarantees. "The object of these overtures is to create dissension in the Allied countries, to stifle opinion in Germany, and to deceive opinion in neutral countries. The Allied Governments refuse to consider a proposal which is empty and insincere." On receiving this uncompromising reply, the Kaiser issued a fighting manifesto to the army and navy drafted by Ludendorff. "Our enemies have declined our suggestion. They desire the destruction of Germany. Before God and humanity the enemy Governments must bear the heavy responsibility for the further terrible sacrifice which I desired to spare you. In your just anger at the boundless frivolity of our foes, in your firm will to defend our holiest possessions, your hearts will turn to steel. Our enemies have not desired the hand of understanding I offered them. With God's help our arms will compel them to accept it."

This was not the end of the story, for between the peace offer of 12th December and the Allied reply of 30th December President Wilson had appealed to the belligerents to announce the terms on which they thought that the struggle might be concluded. Once again the Chancellor politely declined to announce the German terms. Direct discussion between belligerent

delegates in some neutral country, he replied, seemed the best road to peace; and he added that Germany would gladly co-operate with the United States in the work of preventing future wars. The Allies, on the other hand, proceeded to define their terms in a joint reply to the President, which amounted to a declaration of war to the death. The invaded territories were to be evacuated and compensated; provinces formerly torn from the Allies by force or against the wish of their inhabitants were to be returned; the subject races of the Hapsburg Empire were to be liberated from foreign domination; Turkey was to be partitioned and Turkish rule in Europe to cease; the Polish provinces of Germany and Austria were to be ceded to Russia. At the end of this fulminating manifesto came a sentence designed to drive a wedge between the nation and its Government. "There is no need to say that, if the Allies desire to shield Europe from the covetous brutality of Prussian militarism, the extermination and the political disappearance of the German people have never formed part of their designs."

The President refused to accept defeat, being convinced that the reply of the Allies was not to be taken *au pied de la lettre*; and confidential discussions continued between Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, and Colonel House, the *alter ego* of the President. A speech by the American Ambassador in Berlin on 6th January surprised the world by its cordial tone. "Our relations were never better," declared Mr. Gerard, "and their continuance is guaranteed so long as men like Bethmann-Hollweg, Helfferich, and Zimmermann, Hindenburg and Ludendorff remain." To these blandishments the German Government turned a deaf ear. Zimmermann telegraphed to Bernstorff that American mediation was undesirable, since the enemy must not be led to think that the peace offer had been dictated by fear. "We are convinced that we can win. You must therefore be dilatory in stating our conditions. You can, however, tell Wilson that they are

very moderate. We do not wish to annex Belgium, but we cannot discuss Alsace-Lorraine." So confident indeed were the directors of German policy that, at the very moment when President Wilson was striving for peace without victory, they decided on a course which involved not only the prolongation of the struggle but the addition of the American mediator himself to the serried ranks of their enemies.

The outcry in the United States after the sinking of the *Lusitania,* in May 1915, convinced the German Government that the continuation of the unlimited submarine campaign would speedily involve the entry of the most formidable of neutral Powers into the war. The risk seemed too great, and after a bout of diplomatic fencing submarine warfare was confined within specified limits. The decision was accepted with reluctance, and the knowledge that America was selling munitions in colossal quantities for use against German troops on the western front taught Germany to regard her as already an enemy in everything but name. Falkenhayn had protested against the limitation in the spring of 1916, and when he made way for Hindenburg and Ludendorff the new chiefs were only persuaded to hold their hand till the " peace offer " had been made. Its contemptuous rejection ended the controversy. On reading Mr. Lloyd George's interim reply Ludendorff telegraphed that the U-boat campaign must now be recommenced in its fullest extent. Hindenburg declined to guarantee the western front without it, and the Admiralty promised to bring England to her knees within five months. To the objection that the decision involved war with the United States, the military and naval chiefs proudly replied that Germany was ready to meet all eventualities. The feeble Chancellor, fated to accept decisions of which he disapproved, withdrew his opposition, plaintively observing, " It is our last card." He would have been wise to resign, for his prestige was gone. It was his hope that by remaining in office he might be able to prevent the complete triumph of the

Right ; but it could make little difference who occupied the Chancellor's palace. Henceforth both the Kaiser and his civilian advisers shrunk away to shadows beside Ludendorff's towering figure and despotic will.

The decision to renew the unrestricted use of their submarines was welcomed with enthusiasm by a people fighting a desperate battle and maddened by the hunger and sufferings of the " Rüben-Winter." [1] In such a struggle for existence, it was argued, no weapon could be left unused. Victory might peradventure be won before an unarmed nation girded itself for the fray. Yet this momentous decision, though ratified by popular approval, struck terror into the minds of those who knew something not only of the resources but of the spirit of the American people. The attack on Belgium had mobilised the British Empire, indignant and united, and thereby rendered victory improbable. The resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, after reiterated warnings from Washington, rendered it impossible. Far-seeing men realised in a flash that the war was lost ; for the time-table of the Admiralty, based on totals and tonnage, omitted the *imponderabilia* that inspire the energies of a resolute foe.

To no one did the decision at Pless come as a greater shock than to the German Ambassador at Washington. He had implored the Wilhelmstrasse not to raise U-boat difficulties, and on receiving instructions to announce on 31st January 1917 that the campaign would begin on 1st February, he wired to implore postponement, since the President was about to declare himself. On 22nd January the President's memorable address to the Senate outlined the policy afterwards embodied in the Fourteen Points, and argued that only a peace between equals could last. On 26th January he formally offered to act as mediator for a peace by understanding. " Wilson thinks the Entente terms impossible," wired Bernstorff, " and gave the Senate his own programme in reply. He now hopes for German terms which could

[1] Swedes.

be published. If the U-boat campaign begins, he will regard it as a smack in the face, and war will be inevitable." The Chancellor, like a drowning man, caught at the straw and wired a reply on 29th January. " Germany is ready to accept the offer of mediation to obtain a conference, but our acceptance of the offer must be kept secret. After the Allied reply we cannot publicly announce the terms we had in mind on making the offer on 12th December, for they would look like weakness."

The terms, sent for the private information of the President, included restitution of the small portion of Alsace occupied by German troops ; the acquisition of a strategical and economic frontier-zone separating Germany and Poland from Russia ; the restitution of colonial conquests, securing to Germany colonial territory commensurate with her population and economic interests ; the restoration of occupied France, subject to certain strategic and economic modifications and financial compensation ; the restitution of Belgium under guarantees for the safety of Germany ; compensation for German undertakings and civilians damaged by the war ; renunciation of economic obstacles to normal commerce ; and the freedom of the seas. There was much that was vague in this programme, but its moderation harmonised with the President's view that neither side would be able to dictate terms. Had the offer been made a few days earlier, comments Bernstorff mournfully, Germany could have postponed her campaign. But twenty-one submarines had now sailed for their stations. The Ambassador handed the Chancellor's terms to Colonel House ; but on 31st January, before Washington had time to digest them, he obeyed the order to inform the Government that unrestricted submarine warfare would be resumed on the following day. " This means war," rejoined the President, who promptly broke off diplomatic relations. Two months later he declared war, and nothing more was heard from Washington of peace without victory.

The early months of 1917 brought no evidence to the German people that they had lost the game. The ravages of the submarines caused consternation in Whitehall; for during April one ship in four which left our shores was destroyed, and Germany constructed submarines quicker than we sank them. Moreover, before President Wilson launched his thunderbolt, the Russian autocracy had tottered to its fall. The failure of Brusiloff's offensive in the early summer ended Russia's effective participation in the struggle, and aroused the dazzling hope that the armies of the East might before long become available for a knock-out blow in the West. For it was now clear that there was little danger of the western front being pierced during the campaign of 1917. Nivelle's offensive at the Chemin des Dames ended in costly failure, and the long-drawn struggle of Paschendael left the *status quo* virtually unchanged.

While the confidence of Germany remained unbroken, her partners envisaged the situation with very different eyes. The Turks evacuated Bagdad in March, and the Bulgarian peasants were beginning to grumble at the prolonged absence from their farms. More alarming was the warning from Vienna that the Dual Monarchy had almost reached the end of its tether. A new spirit ruled in the Hofburg since Karl succeeded Francis Joseph in November 1916, and his first manifesto to his subjects expressed his desire to bring the conflict to an end. Suiting the action to the word the young Emperor opened up negotiations with the Western Powers through his brother-in-law Prince Sixte of Bourbon, who was serving in the Belgian Army. Though Germany was certain of victory, he declared, he could not sacrifice his country for her sake, and would make a separate peace if she rejected a reasonable settlement. So anxious, indeed, was he for peace that he added that he would use all his influence with his allies in support of "the just claim of France in relation to Alsace-Lorraine."

The negotiations had been carried on without the knowledge of Berlin; but on 3rd April 1917 Karl and his Foreign Minister Czernin met the Kaiser and his Chancellor at Homburg, and conveyed their opinion in the plainest language. They had no hope of victory. If Germany refused reasonable terms, Austria could not fight beyond the autumn. Peace involved the cession of Alsace-Lorraine, which Austria would compensate by ceding Galicia to a reunited Poland within the German orbit. On his return to Vienna, Karl forwarded to the Kaiser a prophetic memorandum by Czernin, painting the situation in the darkest colours. "Our military resources are coming to an end. We must begin negotiations before our enemies are fully conscious of our exhaustion. Another winter campaign is absolutely out of the question. The burden on our people is now intolerable. The bow is so taut that it may snap at any moment." The Kaiser cheerfully replied that he was confident of victory, and that a peace involving heavy sacrifices would also involve grave dangers to the throne. The Courts agreed to differ, and Karl pursued his negotiations with the Entente; but his refusal to satisfy the demands of Italy brought the conversations to an end, and forced him back into the iron grip of his ally.

The German Government had only just succeeded in restoring the Austrian sheep to the fold when a greater shock was experienced nearer home. The necessity of compromise had long been preached, not only by the Minority Socialists but by the leaders of the Majority as well. The two sections found an opportunity of discussing terms of peace with their foreign friends at the Stockholm Conference in June 1917, organised by a Dutch-Scandinavian Committee.[1] The Majority, represented by Ebert, Scheidemann, David, Hermann Müller, and Legien, stated in answer to a *questionnaire* that they desired neither annexation nor indemnities; and Scheidemann stated on his

[1] See Scheidemann, *Der Zusammenbruch.*

return that he had reached the conviction that the war could only be brought to an end when Germany was completely democratised. The Minority, represented by Haase, Bernstein, Ledebour, and Kautzky, in addition to rejecting annexations and indemnities, advocated compensation to Belgium and a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine. Thus both sections desired a clear declaration from the Government which could pave the way to peace. So long as the demand came from the Socialists alone, the Government could afford to turn a deaf ear; but they were now reinforced from an unexpected quarter.

On 6th July Erzberger read to his colleagues of the Centrum Czernin's despairing memorandum, of which he had obtained a copy, adding that the war could not be won.[1] The effect was electrical; for he had been an ardent annexationist, and his conversion was a portent. When the most forceful personality in Catholic Germany, who had been entrusted with important official missions, declared that the war must end in a draw, a first-class political crisis ensued. Bethmann-Hollweg was regarded in all quarters as lacking the qualities of leadership. The hostility of the Conservatives had been intensified since he had advised the Kaiser to promise the reform of the Prussian franchise in a recent "Easter Message," and the Socialists were weary of his ambiguities. It was not, however, the Reichstag which sealed his fate, but the Army Chiefs, who threatened resignation if his services were to be continued. The Kaiser, though resenting the increasing encroachment of Hindenburg and Ludendorff in affairs of State, bowed to their will. The post was offered to Hertling, the veteran Bavarian Premier, who refused on the ground of age, and then, for reasons which have never been revealed, to Michaelis, a Prussian official, who quickly demonstrated his total unfitness for office. Henceforth, declares Bethmann Hollweg in his pathetic memoirs, Germany

[1] See Erzberger, *Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg*.

was governed by a military dictatorship. The change was less in reality than in his imagination ; for since he had yielded on the issue of submarine warfare, the will of the Army Chiefs had been supreme.[1]

The fall of the Chancellor was only the first of the consequences of Erzberger's bomb. The Catholic leader, working with his habitual energy, drew up a resolution embodying the message which he had delivered to his party associates. "The Reichstag strives for a peace of understanding and the permanent reconciliation of the peoples. With such a peace forced requisitions of territory and political, economic, or financial oppressions are inconsistent. It also rejects all schemes which aim at economic barriers after the war. The freedom of the seas must be made secure. So long, however, as the enemy Governments threaten Germany and her allies with conquests and oppression, the German nation will fight till its own and its allies' right to life and development is secured." Michaelis declared that his aims were attainable within the framework of the resolution, "as I understand it" ; and the resolution was carried by 212 to 126. The majority consisted of the Centrum, the Majority Socialists and some of the Liberals, the minority of the Conservatives, National Liberals, and Independents. The latter were naturally in favour of a "peace by understanding," and would have supported the resolution but for its final sentence. The Reichstag Resolution was claimed by its supporters to have rallied the German people to what was henceforth a purely defensive struggle, while the Right argued with equal conviction that it had strengthened the resolve of Germany's enemies to compass her downfall.

The Russian demand for a peace without annexations or indemnities, the Austrian appeal for a cessation of hostilities before the winter, the Reichstag Resolution,

[1] From this point Hertling, *Ein Jahr in der Reichskanzlei*, and Payer, *Von Bethmann-Hollweg bis Ebert*, take us behind the scenes.

and the Fourteen Points were variations on a single theme. At this moment a new influence, pointing in the same direction, appeared. On the eve of his fall Bethmann-Hollweg had received a visit from the Nuncio, who brought a letter from the Pope to the Kaiser. It would be of great assistance, declared the Nuncio, to know the German terms. The Chancellor replied that Germany would limit her armaments if others did the same, and would restore the independence of Belgium, which, however, must not fall under the political, military, and financial domination of England and France. "Will you make territorial concessions in Alsace-Lorraine?" queried the Nuncio. "If France is ready for an understanding," replied the Chancellor, "that will not be an obstacle. Each side would make rectifications of frontier." The Kaiser's reception of the Nuncio was no less friendly, and after taking similar soundings in other capitals the Pope issued an appeal to the belligerents on 1st August to consider a peace without victory. When the appeal was ignored or declined by the Allies, the Pope suggested to the German Government that a definite promise of independence and compensation to Belgium would be a useful step towards negotiations. A Crown Council approved the restoration of the integrity and sovereignty of Belgium; but the Pope was informed that conversations were only possible on the basis that neither side was beaten, and that it was therefore useless to publish terms.

Despite its refusal to respond to the Pope's request for its war aims, the German Government made more than one attempt to establish contact with Paris and London. The submarine campaign had failed to bring England to her knees, and by the beginning of the fourth year of the struggle signs of war-weariness were becoming visible on every side. The Crown Prince, following the example of Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, joined the Moderates, and Kühlmann, the able Foreign Secretary, was eager for compromise

on the basis of the *status quo*. His advances met with no response; for the demand for Alsace-Lorraine remained in the forefront of the programme of the Allies. For this sacrifice no German was prepared. "The quarrel for which Europe is gradually being transformed into a rubbish heap," declared Kühlmann, "is the future of Alsace-Lorraine. To the question, 'Can Germany make any concession in Alsace-Lorraine?' we have only one answer to make. No! Never! So long as a German hand can hold a rifle, the integrity of the Empire cannot be the subject of any negotiations. What we are fighting for is not fantastic conquests, but the integrity of the Empire. There is no absolute obstacle to peace except France's wish for Alsace-Lorraine." Kühlmann was right. The surrender of the Rhine provinces was psychologically impossible unless Germany was beaten. The Challenge Cup of Europe was waiting for the winner. Even the inviolability of the Reich, however, was insufficient for the ardent spirits who at this moment founded the *Vaterlandspartei*, with an opulent programme of conquests and indemnities. Duke John of Mecklenburg was its President, but its soul was Tirpitz, who had lost his post in 1916. Among its most active supporters were Professor Dietrich Schäfer, the Berlin historian, and Dr. Kapp, who had won notoriety as a bitter assailant of Bethmann-Hollweg. During the closing year of the war the Fatherland Party, strong in funds and membership, actively opposed the compromise peace advocated by the Reichstag Resolution. To counteract its inflammatory appeals, a rival organisation was created by Professor Delbrück and other moderates in the academic world.

Though the gathering legions of America hovered like a dark cloud on the horizon, there were aspects of the situation in the autumn of 1917 well calculated to maintain the courage and even the confidence of the Central Powers. At the end of October a stunning blow at Caporetto carried the invaders within sight

of the towers of Venice. Early in November Kerensky was overthrown by the Bolshevists, who opened peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. Deprived of Russian aid, Roumania was forced out of the war. In England Lord Lansdowne's letter to the *Daily Telegraph* counselled a revision of war-aims. The acute anxieties of the Allies arising from the Italian *débâcle* and the defection of Russia were reflected in the declaration of the British Premier of 5th January 1918. The "reconsideration" of the problem of Alsace-Lorraine suggested something less than the integral surrender of the provinces. The break-up of Austria-Hungary was explicitly disavowed. The Turks were no longer to be chased across the Bosphorus. It was added that the adoption of a democratic Constitution by Germany would be the most convincing evidence that the old spirit of military domination had died. "Mr. Lloyd George no longer indulges in abuse," commented Hertling, who had succeeded the ineffective Michaelis as Chancellor. "Our military situation has never been so favourable. If the enemy Powers are really inclined to peace, they should revise their programme again." Peace, he added, was impossible without the integrity of the Empire. When the Austrian Government made a similar declaration, the British Premier announced that insistence on the integrity of the possessions of the Central Powers and their two allies made negotiations impossible. During February and the opening days of March, accordingly, the world held its breath waiting for the blow which Ludendorff, with Russia off his hands, was about to strike on the Western front.

Though the opening weeks of 1918 found the Government and the military chiefs full of confidence in victory, the home front showed increasing signs of wear and tear. The Majority Socialists controlled almost the whole of the party Press, but the Independents grew steadily in numbers and influence. Moreover, on the left wing of the Independents stood the Spartacus League, founded

in 1916 and inspired by the teaching of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, which aimed at a system of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, and desired to stop the war by simultaneous strikes in all belligerent countries. Sporadic strikes had occurred in the factories during 1916 and 1917; but in January 1918 a political strike was organised, and for a week half a million men refused to work. The movement was suppressed, and thousands were drafted into the army; but a rehearsal had been held, and in several munition factories revolutionary committees remained in being, awaiting the day when they could resume their activities with better chance of success.

The auspicious opening of the grand attack at St. Quentin, on 21st March 1918, silenced public discussion of a compromise peace, and revived the hopes of decisive victory which had slumbered since the Battle of the Marne. The second blow, launched a day or two after the first offensive had died down before the gates of Amiens, was struck with less vigour and won a smaller prize. After his two assaults had dented the British armour, Ludendorff turned his attention to the French, and hurled his third thunderbolt on the line from Soissons to Rheims. Once more the invaders reached the Marne, and once again their advance was stayed. At this moment a final Austrian offensive on the Piave was repulsed with heavy loss, and on 25th June the clear-sighted Kühlmann delivered a speech in the Reichstag which announced to those who had ears to hear that victory had again eluded their grasp. "A conclusion by military decision without diplomatic negotiations is improbable." The territorial integrity of Germany and her allies, he added, was a condition of settlement; but he could not say when the struggle would end. The hint that, in spite of the intoxicating triumphs of the last three months, the war could not be won on the battlefield came as a shock to the high-strung nerves of the nation, and the offender was promptly dismissed at the bidding of the Army Chiefs. His crime

was not in holding these opinions, which were widely shared in the highest quarters, but in giving expression to them.

How accurately he had gauged the trend of events was revealed when Ludendorff struck his fourth blow on 15th July. " If my offensive at Rheims succeeds," remarked the German leader, " we have won the war." The Marne was crossed, but Rheims held fast. The tidal wave set in motion on 21st March had reached its limit and began to ebb. The appeal to President Wilson to accelerate the flow of American troops had produced an astonishing response, and Foch at last began the counter-offensive which he had refused to launch till he was sure of his ground. The invaders were chased back across the Marne, Allied offensives on the Amiens and Belgian front were equally successful, and on 8th August a Franco-British attack recaptured part of the St. Quentin area lost in March. The latter defeat was in itself of no great importance ; but the loss of *moral* on " the black day of the German army " convinced Ludendorff that the war could not be won. His opinion was communicated to the Kaiser and the Chancellor at a conference at Spa on 13th August. Hertling was empowered to explore the avenues of peace whenever he thought fit ; but the situation was not yet regarded as critical, and no immediate steps were taken. The victorious advance of the Allies continued, and on 30th August Austria announced her resolve to invite the belligerents to a conference. On 8th September the Army Chiefs informed the Chancellor that they desired peace as soon as possible, but Hertling resolved to hold his hand till the Allied offensive died down.

The Chancellor, like the rustic in Horace, waited for the river to flow by, and meanwhile the stupendous drama hurried to its appointed end.[1] On 15th Septem-

[1] See *Preliminary History of the Armistice.* (Translation by the Carnegie Endowment, 1924.) The closing scenes are brilliantly described in Nowak's books, *The Collapse of Central Europe,* and *Chaos.*

ber a supplicating appeal from Austria to her enemies for verbal discussion revealed that she was at the last gasp ; and on the same day an overwhelming Allied offensive began in Macedonia which in ten days brought a request for an armistice and the abdication of King Ferdinand. The collapse of Bulgaria sealed the fate of Turkey, and prompted Roumania to re-enter the war. Meanwhile the Western front was reeling under the hammer strokes of the Allies. Ludendorff's nerves were wearing thin, and on 30th September he announced that hostilities must end. His subsequent contention that the army was " stabbed in the back " is disposed of by a simple comparison of dates, for he threw up the sponge a month before the mutiny at Kiel. The situation demanded a broad-bottom ministry enjoying the full confidence of the Reichstag ; but such a change Hertling was too old and stiff to accept. While the Kaiser and the outgoing Chancellor were closeted together at Spa on 1st October, Ludendorff entered the room and cried excitedly, " Is not the new Government formed ? " " I cannot work miracles," replied the Kaiser. " It must be formed at once," rejoined the General, " for the request for peace must be made to-day." Three days later Prince Max of Baden, heir to the Grand Duchy and a moderate Liberal, was appointed Chancellor, and on the following day the new Government, in which Scheidemann, David, and Bauer represented the Socialists, requested President Wilson to restore peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points and to invite the belligerents to appoint plenipotentiaries.

The new spirit was once again revealed by Erzberger, who was as sensitive to atmospheric change as a barometer. In September 1918 he completed the first treatise on a League of Nations which had appeared in Germany.[1] " The Reichstag Resolution of 1917 on peace by understanding," he wrote in the Preface, " was an oath of allegiance to the League of Nations. This

[1] An English translation of *The League of Nations* appeared in 1919.

volume considers how it is to be achieved." Beginning with the demand for a League by Bethmann-Hollweg, Grey, Wilson, the Pope, and many other leading men in belligerent and neutral countries, he declares compulsory arbitration the supreme need of the time. Had it existed in 1914, the Serbian dispute would have been settled. "Half measures are not enough. The war has overleaped decades of pacifist thinking." With compulsory arbitration great armies would lose their significance and disarmament would become possible. The last years of peace proved that armaments were an agency of war, not a guarantee of peace. Only next in importance was the open door, or equal economic rights for all nations. The bureau of the League, like the Court of Arbitration, should establish itself at the Hague, where its members should be represented by a council composed of their resident ministers under the chairmanship of the Dutch Foreign Minister.

Throughout October the wires between Washington and Berlin were working at high pressure. It was plain to all the world that, with the formation of a Ministry composed of the party leaders in the Reichstag, Germany had taken the first step on the path to responsible government; but it was less certain that she would continue her advance if the military situation improved, and it was argued that what the Kaiser could give he could also take away. In his first address to the Reichstag the new Chancellor confidently assumed that the old world was dead. The Ministry contained representatives of Labour, he declared, and could therefore speak for the nation. It accepted the Reichstag Resolution of July 1917, and a League of Nations. Belgium should be completely restored, the Baltic States, Poland, and Lithuania should determine their own fate. "The thoughts regarding the future well-being of the nations proclaimed by President Wilson," he added, "are in accord with those of the new Government and the overwhelming majority of our people."

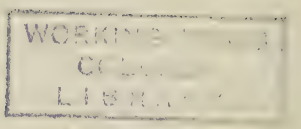
There could be no doubt about the personal sincerity of Prince Max, whose every accent breathed the conviction that he was the spokesman of a free and sovereign people, not the mere nominee of an autocrat. But the forces against which the world was arrayed in arms were scotched, not killed ; Ludendorff was still in command, and the Kaiser was still on the throne. The President proceeded by a long-range catechism to assure himself that " the destruction or reduction to virtual impotency of the arbitrary power which has hitherto controlled the German nation " should be achieved. " It is indispensable that the Allies should know beyond a peradventure with whom they are dealing." The dictation by a foreign Power in the internal affairs of the German nation was naturally resented by the Right ; but it was frankly recognised in the circles of the Centre and the Left that the system of government in Germany was of more than German interest. Had the Imperial system retained the confidence and affection of the nation, the barbed arrows of Washington would have rallied opinion to its support ; but the spell was broken, and the country was ready to part with a ruler whose personality seemed to block the path to a tolerable peace.

At the end of October President Wilson suggested to his Allies that they should draft conditions for an armistice, and to the German Government that the best guarantee of the permanence of the recent constitutional changes would be found in its acceptance. While the Allies were drafting their terms, Austria passed out of the war and broke into fragments, and Turkey laid down her arms. Germany now stood alone, and the end could not be far off. Ludendorff had hurried Prince Max into an appeal for peace ; but when the plight of the army had thus been revealed he changed his mind, declared that the front could still be held for some time, and clamoured for a *levée en masse*. But Ludendorff's word was no longer law, and everyone, from the Kaiser downwards, was weary of his imperious ways.

His resignation was accepted on 27th October, while Hindenburg, less richly endowed but more unselfish than his nominal subordinate, remained at his post to the end.

On 5th November the conditions were announced on which the victors were prepared to treat for peace. The Fourteen Points were accepted, subject to a free hand on the freedom of the seas and to a special definition of reparations. In forwarding this document President Wilson added that Marshal Foch was authorised to receive representatives of the German Government and to communicate to them the terms of an armistice. Prince Max invited Erzberger to represent the Cabinet, and associated with him General Winterfeldt, an ex-Military Attaché at Paris. On 8th November the German Delegates were conducted through the French lines to the forest of Compiègne, where Foch handed to them the demands of the Allies. The terms included evacuation of all conquered territories, withdrawal beyond the Rhine, the establishment of a neutral zone on the right bank, the cancelling of the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest, the repatriation of prisoners, the surrender of guns, aeroplanes, rolling-stock, and, last but not least, the fleet. It was added that negotiations were impossible, and that the terms must be accepted or rejected by 11 a.m. on 11th November. Crushing as they were, there could be no thought of their rejection. For not only did the irresistible advance of the Allies continue, but the home front had at last been broken by revolution. The German people, like the German armies, had had their fill of war. A naval mutiny had broken out at Kiel, and a tidal wave swept over the country. On 9th November a Republic was proclaimed in Berlin, and on the same day the Kaiser abdicated and fled to Holland. The first task of the Provisional Government, which succeeded that of Prince Max, was to accept the armistice. The document was signed at 5.20 on 11th November in the Marshal's

railway saloon, and at 11 a.m. the struggle, in which 1,700,000 German combatants had perished, came to an end. The armistice was the result of military defeat, not of the revolution ; but the political earthquake provided an additional reason for bowing to the decrees of inexorable fate.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CHAPTER VIII

THE REVOLUTION

"ALL premeditated revolutions are unsuccessful," remarked Goethe to Eckermann, "for they are without God, who stands aloof from such bungling. If, however, there exists an actual necessity for a great reform, God is with it and it prospers." The Revolution of November 1918 belongs to the latter category, and its outbreak was foretold by thoughtful observers. "It is no good telling me," wrote Czernin in his celebrated memorandum of April 1917, "that the monarchical idea is too firmly rooted in Berlin and Vienna for the monarchy to be overthrown. This war has no precedent. If the monarchs do not make peace in the next few months, their peoples will make it over their heads, and then the waves of revolution will sweep away everything for which our sons are fighting to-day." The German people is not temperamentally inclined to violent courses, but the bow that is drawn too taut will always snap. The earthquake in Germany represented, not a calculated attempt to carry out certain clearly defined political and social ideas, but an automatic reaction to a situation that had become unbearable.[1] It was indeed rather a collapse than a revolution, rather an event than an act. The Imperial edifice had lost both its material strength and its emotional appeal, and a touch sufficed to hurl it into the abyss. Never was there less deliberate planning, yet never was there less resistance to overcome.

The change was carried through by the Socialists, while the bourgeoisie looked on, too stunned either to hinder or to help. Defeat had come with a rush, which allowed no time for psychological adjustment.

[1] See Bernstein, *Die deutsche Revolution*; Ströbel, *The German Revolution*; Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp*; General Maercker, *Vom Kaiserheer zur Reichswehr*; Matthaei, *Germany in Revolution*; George Young, *The New Germany*; M. P. Price, *Germany in Transition*; *Handbuch der Politik*, vol. 2.

Though it had been impossible to conceal the August retreat, and though both the Generals and the Government knew that the war was lost, gigantic official placards announced as late as the first half of September that ultimate victory was assured. So deeply rooted was public confidence in the military demigods that the optimist continued to dream of annexations, and the pessimist was the man who anticipated a compromise. And then, like bolts from the blue, came Austria's shrill cry of despair, the sudden capitulation of Bulgaria, and Prince Max's hurried appeal to President Wilson. In a single fortnight the fortifying certainty of victory passed into the agonising consciousness of defeat. The Reichstag Resolution of 1917, it is true, had envisaged an anti-climax ; but since that fleeting moment of hesitation Russia and Roumania had laid down their arms, and Ludendorff's offensive had revived the hopes that had been frustrated at the Marne. Though the Government had long been aware of the uncertainty of the issue, it had continued to base its policy on the assumption that defeat was unthinkable. The sinews of war continued to be provided by loans ; the Prussian franchise remained unreformed ; the Belgians and the people of North-Eastern France were exploited and dragooned without a thought that the tables could ever be turned, or that there might be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The realisation of the imminence of defeat was accordingly followed by a revulsion of feeling against the military leaders, the political rulers, and even the institutions of State. Since the war was lost, the sooner it ended the better. If the Kaiser were an obstacle to peace, let him go. If thrones were a hindrance, let them fall. The wheel had come full circle. The Hohenzollern Empire had been cradled in victory, and it perished of defeat.

When a revolution becomes a historical necessity, it is of little consequence by whose hand the flood-gates are opened. In the present case the lever was pulled

by a handful of sailors. The German armies had never experienced a mutiny like that in the French lines in the spring of 1917 ; but in 1917 a miniature mutiny had occurred in the fleet, and its ringleaders were shot. The bravery of the naval arm had been amply proved in the waters of the North Sea ; but when on 28th October 1918 the fleet was ordered to steam out, and it was rumoured that a final desperate struggle with the British was to be staged before the approaching fall of the curtain, some of the crews, first in one vessel, then in another, extinguished the fires. The mutineers explained their attitude in a proclamation. " If the English attack us, we will defend our coasts to the last, but we will not ourselves attack. Further than Heligoland we will not go." It was mutiny, not revolution, a defensive gesture against aimless carnage, not an assault on the political or social institutions of the Fatherland.

The authorities responded by wholesale arrests, but their attempts to restore discipline stiffened the back of the mutineers. On 1st November a meeting was held in the Kiel Town Hall and a deputation was sent to demand the immediate release of their comrades, but was met with a refusal to negotiate. On 2nd November a company disobeyed orders to disperse gatherings of the mutineers. On 3rd November a monster demonstration of sailors and workers was held, some imprisoned mutineers were set free, cheers were raised for the Republic, and the first blood was shed by the firing of a patrol. On 4th November the whole navy was in a ferment, a Soldiers' Council was formed, and Admiral Souchon expressed his readiness to meet the mutineers. Among the demands presented, that for the liberation of their comrades was at once accepted. The red flag was hoisted on all the warships, and the sailors telegraphed to Berlin for Haase and Ledebour.

The telegram summoning the Independent leaders was held up, but the Government despatched Noske,

a Majority Socialist, to Kiel to report and take control. On arriving at the station on the evening of 4th November he was met by men with red badges, and instantly realised that a mutiny had grown into a revolution. The demands of the Soldiers' Council were conceded, the soldiers undertook to maintain order, the military measures that had been ordered were countermanded, and Noske was elected Governor of Kiel. On 5th November the whole working-class population joined the revolt and formed Workmen's Councils, which were joined by the existing Soldiers' Councils. On the same day warships sailed into Hamburg and Lübeck under the red flag. In Lübeck power passed without a struggle into the hands of a Soldiers' Council, which issued the first political manifesto of the Revolution. "From to-night Lübeck is in our hands. We are serving our comrades at the front and at home. The corrupt system and the military dictatorship of yesterday must disappear. Our aim is an immediate armistice and peace. We urge the people of Lübeck to preserve perfect tranquillity. We shall do nothing to endanger it. Everything continues as usual. We expect willing cooperation." Bremen accepted the new order on the same day, but blood was shed in Hamburg, where futile efforts were made to suppress the revolt. On 6th November the fire spread eastward to Schwerin and Rostock, and southward to Hanover, Brunswick, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Magdeburg, Halle, Leipzig, Dresden, Frankfurt. Within a week the cities of North-West Germany were in the hands of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. There were a few individuals in the rebel ranks who aimed at a revolution in the political system of the country ; but the great majority had at first no thought beyond preventing further bloodshed in a struggle that was virtually ended. To achieve this result it was necessary to obtain control of the machine. That the Russian model of Councils was followed was due to its practical con-

venience, not to Russian gold. Everywhere the officials surrendered and the garrisons joined the revolt. In the northern towns the sailors took the first step, but in the interior it was the urban workers who seized the helm.

While the red flag was being hoisted in the cities of the north, the first German State to proclaim itself a Republic was Bavaria. But while in the north the movement was elemental and impersonal, arising from disobedience to a preposterous naval command, in the south the stone was set rolling by a single hand. Kurt Eisner,[1] a scholarly Jew, who had edited *Vorwärts* and suffered imprisonment for his views, had settled in Munich a few years before the war. Though the Bavarian Socialists were with few exceptions adherents of the Majority faction, Eisner boldly raised the banner of the Minority, and in the winter of 1917–18 he reached the conclusion that the coming offensive ought to be stopped by a general strike. A speech to this effect during the widespread strike of January 1918 was followed by imprisonment for treason ; but he was released in October, and immediately resumed his efforts to stop the war.

When the news of the successful mutiny in Kiel reached Munich, Eisner addressed a mass meeting on 5th November, and on the following day he summoned the people to a still greater demonstration for the 7th. Though the Socialists formed but a small proportion of a Catholic and Conservative population, the soil was ready for the seed. A resolution drawn up by Eisner was passed with acclamation. " The German people knows itself to be one with all the peoples of Europe in the will to safeguard the future of the world by a universal alliance of law and liberty, and looks forward with confidence to the fulfilment of the world-peace proclaimed by President Wilson." The meeting proceeded to demand the resignation of the Kaiser,

[1] His speeches are collected under the title of *Die neue Zeit*, 1919. Cp. Ernst Müller-Meiningen, *Aus Bayerns Schwersten Tagen.*

an oath of allegiance by the army to the Constitution, and the removal of all obstacles to the complete democratisation of Germany. When the speeches were over the demonstrators marched through the town, and were joined by soldiers from their barracks. The guard of the palace was disarmed, and cries of "Down with the Kaiser, Long live the Republic!" were raised. Eisner became Chairman of the Provisional Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Council, which, on the following day, 8th November, announced the change of government to the world. "Bavaria is forthwith a Free State. A Government of the people will at once be installed. A Constituent Assembly, elected by all adult men and women, will be summoned as soon as possible. A new era dawns. Bavaria will prepare Germany for the League of Peoples. The democratic and social Republic of Bavaria has the moral force to obtain for Germany a peace which saves her from the worst. We rely on the active support of the whole population. All officials retain their posts." In his subsequent declarations the President of the Bavarian Republic preached in eloquent terms the gospel of unity at home and abroad. Peace, freedom, and co-operation were the watchwords of the Revolution, which had been made in order to prevent anarchy. "That was the last war. We greet our late enemies. We wish to build the new age with their aid." Nowhere in the brief annals of the German Revolution do we meet with a more attractive personality or a more humane outlook upon life.

Within a day or two of the explosions in Kiel and Munich, Berlin joined the revolutionary movement and set the seal on its success. On 28th October, Scheidemann had written his historic letter to the Chancellor in which, both as a member of the Cabinet and in the name of the Socialist Party, he demanded the abdication of the Kaiser. Though himself convinced of its necessity, the Chancellor was unable to

convert his master, and on 7th November he received an ultimatum from Scheidemann to the effect that unless the Kaiser had abdicated and the Crown Prince had renounced his claim by the following midday, the Socialists would resign from the Government. No answer arrived from Spa, and on 8th November the Socialists resigned. The same evening the party leaders resolved to proclaim a general strike if the abdication was not announced on the following morning. The left wing of the Socialist army could be relied on to join in the overthrow of the Imperial regime.

The Spartakists derived their title from a series of articles, mostly from the pen of Liebknecht, signed Spartacus, secretly circulated during the war. The name revived the memory of the slave who had raised an army of his comrades and for two years held the forces of the Roman Republic at bay. The neo-Spartakists raised the banner of a war of emancipation for men and women, who, though not slaves in any legal sense, were in their eyes the victims of a social system which deserved nothing better than to be overthrown by force. On 7th October 1918, the Spartakusbund held a conference in Gotha, which resolved to create Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. A fortnight later Liebknecht emerged from prison, and funds were offered and accepted from Yoffe, the Bolshevist Minister to Berlin. Liebknecht and his friends remained members of the Independents, and a joint Committee was formed to work for revolution. It was their first intention to strike on 4th November ; but the date was postponed as the police had notice of the plan.

On the memorable 9th of November the Berlin workers were summoned from the factories during the breakfast hour, and poured into the streets. There were plenty of troops, machine-guns, and police in the city, but they were stricken with paralysis. Socialist emissaries hurried round the barracks, and received the assurance that under no circumstances

would the soldiers shoot. The Chancellor was informed of their reply, and a special edition of *Vorwärts* announced his order that the military should make no use of their weapons. The time was now ripe for a change of government. A deputation from the Majority Socialists, led by Ebert and Scheidemann, visited the Chancellor's palace and found the Cabinet in session. As spokesman of the party, Ebert informed the Ministers that the people desired to take control of their fortunes; that the overwhelming majority of the population stood behind him; that resistance was impossible, as a large part of the garrison had joined the people. To the Chancellor's question whether he could answer for the maintenance of order, Ebert replied in the affirmative. The Chancellor now informed his visitors that he had just received a telegram announcing the abdication of the Kaiser. Prince Max then formally resigned the Chancellorship to Ebert, who promptly announced the event in a proclamation:

"Fellow-citizens! The late Chancellor, with the assent of all his Ministers, has transferred to me the direction of affairs. I shall form a Government in association with the parties. The new Government will be a People's Government. Its aim must be to bring peace to the German people as quickly as possible, and to safeguard the freedom which it has won. Fellow-citizens, I implore you to preserve tranquillity and order."

The events at Berlin on 9th November were decisive for the whole country. The kings and princes fled from their capitals, power passed into the hands of the Socialists without shedding of blood, and Soldiers' Councils sprang up at the front.

The first step of the new Chancellor was to invite the Independents to join in forming a Cabinet of equal numbers. It was a generous offer, for the larger party might legitimately claim larger representation; but it was approved at a party meeting which nominated

Ebert, Scheidemann and Landsberg, a Jewish jurist, as its representatives on the Directory. The acceptance of the invitation by the Independents was less prompt and cordial. A section, led by the intransigent Ledebour, denounced the very notion of co-operating with the Majority leaders, whom they regarded as traitors to the Socialist faith. While the discussion was in progress Karl Liebknecht entered the room, and in commanding tones dictated to the reporter the words, "All executive, legislative, and judicial power to the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils." During the embarrassed pause which followed, Scheidemann came to ask for the decision which had been promised for four o'clock. It was finally agreed by a majority vote that Haase, Dittmann, and Barth should enter the Cabinet, which, it was understood, was to consist solely of Socialists. The two former were old and well-known members of the Reichstag, and Barth, a young metal-worker, represented the extreme Left wing of the party. An invitation to the Spartakist leader to be one of the three had been roughly declined.

The difficulty in negotiating the division of power was prophetic of graver disagreements which were to render the partnership of brief duration, and to plunge the unhappy country into the throes of civil strife. The Independents had left the main body exclusively on the issue of the war, and now that it was over, there seemed no differences of principle to veto reunion or at any rate friendly co-operation. Many of the minority were indeed ready, and indeed eager, to take their share in the erection of a pacific and democratic Republic. But the minority was itself riven by an antagonism which cut even deeper than that arising from the war, and before long was to issue in the formation of a Communist Party. Now that the old regime had toppled over like a house of cards, the question to be decided was whether Germany should be governed in accordance with the will of the majority constitutionally expressed, or by the dictator-

ship of a minority inspired by the principles and employing the methods of the Bolshevists. Should heads be counted, or should they be broken? The cleavage was too deep for peaceful settlement; and Berlin, like Paris in 1871, spent the first weeks of the Armistice in the thrills and agonies of civil war.

On the afternoon of 9th November, when Ebert had evicted Prince Max, Liebknecht, accompanied by his followers, marched to the Schloss, hoisted the red flag, and addressed the crowd from one of the windows. Late in the evening of the same eventful day the delegates of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils met in the Reichstag for their first session, which was opened with a fiery address by Barth. It was resolved that on the following morning all factories should elect representatives for the Workers' Council and all barracks for the Soldiers' Council, the delegates to meet in the afternoon and form a Provisional Government. The Provisional Government was not formed, for on 10th November the Minority Socialists accepted the invitation to join the Majority in forming an executive. Among the conditions attached to their co-operation was the statement that "all political power is in the hands of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, who will shortly be summoned from all parts to an Assembly." The agreement was confirmed at a mass meeting of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils elected that morning.

The three thousand delegates were addressed by Ebert, Haase, and Liebknecht, and rapturous applause greeted Ebert's announcement that the two Socialist parties had formed a joint Government. Despite the publication of an inflammatory Spartakist sheet urging the workers to boycott the "Government Socialists, who have betrayed the Revolution for four years and will continue to betray it," the vast majority of the delegates assembled in the Circus Busch desired nothing so much as reunion. The meeting proceeded to elect a joint Executive Committee, consisting of

six representatives of each wing. Neither Liebknecht nor Rosa Luxemburg consented to stand for election to a body which contained representatives of the hated Majority. The meeting then proceeded to discuss the personnel of the Provisional Government; and though Liebknecht and Ledebour again denounced co-operation, the names of the six Ministers were confirmed by acclamation. In this memorable and representative gathering the Spartakists found that they were only a tiny minority; but the discovery made no difference to their tactics. They had no more respect for majority rule than the Kaiser or Lenin; and now that the political revolution was accomplished, they resolved to remodel society after their own pattern. After receiving the approval of the meeting, the Cabinet of six met and decided to call themselves the Council of the People's Commissioners. Ebert and Haase were appointed joint Chairmen, and each Minister became responsible for one or more of the Departments of State, the business of which, however, was carried on by experts. Thus Haase was entrusted with Foreign Affairs, but Dr. Solf remained the Secretary of State. Erzberger continued to represent the country in the Armistice negotiations, and Hindenburg remained in command of the army.

On 12th November the People's Commissioners issued their first Manifesto:

> "To the German People:
>
> The Government is purely Socialist in complexion, and aims at carrying out the Socialist programme. It proclaims the following with force of law:—
>
> 1. The state of siege is ended.
> 2. The right of association and assembly is free to all.
> 3. The censorship is abolished.
> 4. The expression of opinion is free.

5. Religion is free.
6. Political offences are amnestied.
7. The law of auxiliary service is abolished.
8. The Servants' Ordinances are repealed.
9. The Labour Laws suspended at the beginning of the war are again in force.

Further decrees will shortly be announced, and the maximum eight-hours' day will become operative at latest by 1st January 1919. The Government will maintain orderly production and defend property against attack, and the liberty and security of the person. All elections for public bodies are henceforth to be held by equal, secret, direct, and universal franchise on the basis of proportional representation for all men and women over twenty. This applies also to the Constituent Assembly, of which details will be announced."

This historic proclamation announced a democratic Republic with a socialist tinge; but the moderation of its tone was gratefully recognised by the bourgeois parties. The Revolution had been made by the leaders of a class which had grown strong by discipline, and of the People's Commissioners Barth alone was inexperienced and doctrinaire. Now that the soldiers had joined the workers, the Socialists were supreme; and the union of the two wings in the Government seemed to assure a peaceful transition both from autocracy to democracy and from war to peace. The Spartakists were, indeed, a danger, but their numbers were few. Yet the new machinery of government proved impossible to work, for the two groups, though not lacking in goodwill, were constantly at loggerheads. The Majority had co-operated throughout the war with the bourgeois parties, desired to continue co-operation, and regarded themselves as trustees for a Constituent Assembly. On the other hand, the traditional hostility of the Minority Socialists to the bourgeoisie had been intensified by an ever-deepening

hatred of the war and its supporters. Moreover, a section of the Minority approved the propaganda of the Spartakists, and regarded the political upheaval as nothing more than the prelude to the real business of social revolution. The experiment of co-operation was well worth trying, but there was little prospect of enduring success. Power, it was soon discovered, was easier to win than to keep.

Rosa Luxemburg was the brain of the Spartakists, as Liebknecht was their voice ; and on 18th November she formulated their programme in the Spartakist organ, *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag). Among her demands were Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in town and country, a Parliament of the Councils with an executive to be appointed therefrom, a Red Guard, the transfer of administration and justice to organs of the Councils, and the confiscation of great landed estates. " The agenda of world-history reads to-day : Realisation of the ultimate goal of socialism." Such trifles as the consent of the majority never trouble the head or deflect the course of the revolutionary doctrinaire, enslaved to the formula that destruction must precede reconstruction. Thus the *Rote Fahne* encouraged strikes, and mocked at the Independents for welcoming an eight-hour day instead of demanding a shift of six hours.

The shrill cries of the Spartakists and their daily demonstrations in the streets were no evidence of widespread support ; but they scared both the bourgeoisie, against whom they preached a holy war, and the Majority Socialists, who were responsible for the preservation of social peace. The attempt to form a Red Guard had been frustrated by the Soldiers' Councils of the Berlin regiments ; but Eichhorn, an Independent, who had been appointed Chief of the Berlin Police, created a force numbering several thousands. Since the loyalty of these men to the Directory was doubtful, Otto Wels, a Majority Socialist, the Military Commander of Berlin, organised a Repub-

lican militia to redress the balance. In a city full of armed and angry men a collision was inevitable. The first blood was shed on 21st November; and on 24th November the *Rote Fahne* uttered the ominous threat, "Whoever stands in the way of the Social Revolution will be cut to pieces."

The fateful antagonism of Right and Left emerged in the conference of the State governments held on 25th November. After Erzberger and Solf had given a gloomy account of the prospects abroad, Eisner, the head of the Bavarian executive, sharply attacked them, and argued that negotiations with the victors ought not to be conducted by men in any way associated with the old regime, which, in his opinion, was mainly responsible for making the war. He added that he would have no more dealings with Solf; and it was mainly owing to Eisner's attacks that the Foreign Minister gave place to Brockdorf-Rantzau, German Minister at the Hague. On the other hand, a demand for immediate socialisation was rejected, and it was agreed that a Constituent Assembly should meet as soon as possible. "Till then, the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils are the representatives of the people's will." This resolution covered a wide divergence of aim; for while the Majority desired the National Assembly to meet at the earliest moment, the Minority laboured to defer it till the old military and bureaucratic machine was broken, till socialism had begun, and till the danger of reaction had passed away.

The Spartakists, needless to say, like their Russian mentors, desired that it should not meet at all. For Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were now filling the columns of the *Rote Fahne* with fevered exhortations to eject the Majority Socialists from the Directory, and dealt out arms to their followers. Even Eisner, who desired to purge the Directory but hated bloodshed, solemnly warned the Spartakist leader of the danger to the Revolution involved in his course of action. Appeals were in vain, and when troops

marched through the streets on 5th December the Government was accused of fostering the counter-revolution. On 6th December a collision occurred between a Spartakus procession and a body of soldiers, in which fourteen of the former were killed. Each side maintained that the first shot had come from the other. The *Rote Fahne* called for dire vengeance on the Majority Directors. *Vorwärts* attributed the responsibility to the criminal agitation of the Spartakists, which, it declared, had aroused hot resentment among nine-tenths of the soldiers in Berlin. *Die Freiheit*, the organ of the Minority, argued that the military authorities who had sent the soldiers into the street were the culprits; but it displayed no desire to break up the Coalition Directory.

A trial of strength occurred when the first Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, which had sprung up in all parts of Germany, opened in Berlin on 16th December. The German Soviets resembled their Russian models in little but their constitution and their name. "When the old Government broke down," testifies Count Kessler, "it was a nation with a feverish, indeed a passionate, wish to take its fate into its own hands that was freed. The most remarkable thing about this fervour was the pride in responsibility, the ardent wish of plain men and women to earn their freedom through service to the whole. That is why the Soviet idea appealed to them. They did not wish to cast off responsibility by delegating it through a term of years to Parliamentary representatives: they wished to keep it there tight pressed against their hearts." The Hansa Bund, a pre-war organisation of financiers and business men, created a number of "Citizens' Councils," consisting of people "with a stake in the country," and began to arm a Bürgerwehr or Citizens' Militia. But it was, above all, to the manual worker that the idea of councils appealed. In some places they were appointed in the factories, in others by meetings of the two Socialist parties,

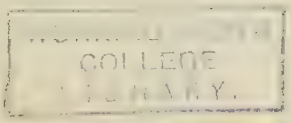
while occasionally representatives of the general public were added. From their ranks committees were chosen to control or supervise the public authorities, while Soldiers' Councils facilitated the return and demobilisation of the troops. The Councils formed a bridge between the officials, who retained their posts, and the people, which had won sovereign power.

By an immense majority the Congress of Councils rejected a proposal to invite Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg to share in the deliberations; but a Spartakist deputation reiterated the familiar demand for the overthrow of the Directory and the transfer of power to the Councils. The Spartakists attempted intimidation by mass demonstrations in the streets, and on 18th December a second deputation forced its way into the hall "in the name of two hundred and fifty thousand workers." There were few Spartakists among the members of the Congress; yet the Directory was sharply attacked by Ledebour and other members of the Left wing of the Independents. The members of the Directory took part in the debates; but the intransigent Barth surprised his colleagues by joining in the onslaught, and Ebert bitterly retorted that he must consult with his friends whether further co-operation was possible. A compromise resolution was carried which satisfied neither the friends nor the enemies of the Directory. "The Congress, which embodies all political power, transmits to the Council of People's Commissioners all legislative and executive power till the meeting of the National Assembly. The Congress will institute a Central Council of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils to supervise both the German and the Prussian Cabinets, the members of which this Council may appoint and dismiss." This Central Council took over the powers hitherto exercised by the Berlin Council, and became, in theory at any rate, the supreme authority in the Republic. It consisted of twenty-seven members, of whom nine represented the Soldiers' Councils. All were Majority Socialists,

since the Independents declined the offer of seats on the ground that its powers were limited. The proposal of the Majority Socialists to elect the National Assembly on 19th January was approved. It was further resolved that the standing army should be replaced by a militia, in which soldiers should elect their officers, and Soldiers' Councils should be responsible for discipline.

While Majority and Minority Socialists were quarrelling in the Congress, the Spartakists were ingeminating communism in the streets. During the transition to the new social order, they declared, the armed rule of the workers was required, resting on a Communist guard. "The rule of the workers is only to be obtained through an armed workers' revolution. The Communists are its advanced guard. The revolution will come, for the bourgeoisie is preparing its defence, and the workers will have the choice between enslavement by the bourgeoisie and rule over the bourgeoisie. The proposed National Assembly would be an organ of the counter-revolutionists for the garrotting of the workers' revolution, and its meeting must be prevented by every means." Though the language of the manifesto was German, the inspiration was Russian. The Revolution, which had begun so hopefully on 9th November, was already in imminent danger of shipwreck on the doctrinaire fanaticism of a small but desperate fraction of a single class. To those who had known and loved Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in their earlier days, it was a grief that such gifts of mind and heart should be employed in fanning the flames of class hatred and civil war. The New Jerusalem can never arise from the dregs of a great city.

Three days after the conclusion of the Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils the expected explosion occurred. The supervision of the Schloss had been entrusted to the People's Marine Division, who were stationed in the Royal Mews ; but after frequent thefts of valuables, Wels, the Military Commandant of Berlin,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demanded that they should be disarmed. The sailors consented on condition that they first received their pay. When Wels declined the stipulation, a party of the sailors visited the Chancellor's palace, locked the doors, and cut off the telephone, while Wels was imprisoned in the Schloss. When it was rumoured that Wels was in danger, General Lequis was ordered to the Schloss ; and in the early morning of 24th December, after an ultimatum, the building was captured. At this point bloodshed was stopped by the mediation of the Independents, and the sailors, who were holding out in the Royal Stables, agreed to withdraw. Thirty lives had been lost, and for the first time since the Revolution a General had fired on the people. The Majority Directors denied that they gave the order ; but Barth maintains that at any rate they hinted a desire.

The immediate result of the bombardment of the Schloss was the withdrawal from the Directory of the Minority representatives, who watched with alarm the rise of the counter-revolutionary tide. Barth's sympathies were avowedly with the sailors, and he accused his Majority colleagues to their face of having deliberately worked for a collision. Haase and Dittmann had taken no part in the sailors' crisis, and had no desire to overthrow the Directory ; but they disapproved the order to the troops to fire on the castle, and in the deference of their colleagues to the generals they scented the danger of resurgent militarism. They accordingly withdrew on 28th December on the ground that the conquests of the Revolution were endangered, and the Independent Prussian Ministers followed suit. The three dissentients represented a party too weak to take over the reins, and the Central Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, to which the Directory had been rendered responsible by the Congress, was on the Majority side. Moreover, the Left wing of their own party, led by Ledebour and Däumig, who shared the Spartakist desire for Soviet Dictatorship, had from the first objected to co-operation. Their resignation was

intelligible, if not inevitable; but it strengthened the hands of the Spartakists, who could now argue that the country was ruled by men who had supported the war, co-operated with the old regime, and shot down the people.

The seats vacated by the Independents were filled by the Central Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils with three Majority Socialists. Löbe, later President of the Reichstag, declined to serve; but Noske and Wissell accepted the nomination. With the change of personnel a shuffling of offices took place, domestic affairs falling to Ebert, foreign to Scheidemann, finance to Landsberg, social policy to Wissell, the forces to Noske. The Directory had gained in cohesion what it had lost in breadth, and in Noske it secured a man as resolute and ruthless as Liebknecht himself. The duty of the reconstituted Government, of which Ebert and Scheidemann were appointed chairmen, was to carry on till the National Assembly could speak for the nation and relieve them of their onerous task.

The lists were now cleared for a decisive struggle between the Government and the Spartakists. At critical moments the Police President of Berlin occupies a key position, and Eichhorn, who had won his post by compelling the surrender of the Police headquarters on 9th November, was a member of the Left wing of the Independents. He had been appointed by the Workers' and Soldiers' Council, not by the Directors, and his Security Police had refused aid in quelling the sailors' revolt. He had had continual friction with Wels, and when the Prussian Minister of the Interior complained he replied that he recognised no obligation to give the Ministry an account of his stewardship, since the Berlin police were subject to the local authority. His response rendered his continuance in office impossible at a moment when Liebknecht was preaching civil war with ever-increasing violence. He was offered and refused the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, and on 4th January he received a curt notice to quit. The aggrieved

official went straight to the headquarters of the Independents, who joined with the Spartakists in an inflammatory proclamation summoning the workers to mass demonstrations against the Government. The crowds were addressed by Liebknecht, Ledebour, and Däumig, arms were handed out, and a procession marched to the Police Presidency, from the balcony of which Eichhorn, Liebknecht, Ledebour, and other Minority leaders urged the excited crowd to overthrow the Government. A general strike was proclaimed, and a Provisional Revolutionary Committee was appointed, with Liebknecht and Ledebour as chairmen. Had the conspirators chosen to seize the Chancellor's palace during the night of 5th–6th January, they would have met with no serious opposition ; for the Directors had left the building and found shelter in the house of a friend. The conspirators merely seized the newspaper offices, and summoned a mass demonstration in the Siegesallee ; but when they had assembled, the leaders could not agree what steps to take. The current had run strongly in their direction, but they had lost the tide.

Though the Opposition strategy was weak, the plight of the Government was dangerous enough. The Directory could place no reliance on the soldiers, the sailors, or the police of Berlin, and in this emergency they raised volunteer corps and asked Noske to take command. " Somebody must be the bloodhound," he replied ; " I won't shirk the responsibility." The choice was confirmed by the Central Council of Workers and Soldiers, which supported the Directory throughout. The appointment of a professional soldier, it was felt, would alienate the workers, and if the burden was to fall on one of the Directors, Noske was the man. He alone of the five possessed the toughness of fibre and absence of squeamishness which the post appeared to demand. It was a momentous decision, and for the next few months Noske occupied the centre of the stage. On the one hand, his resolute conduct saved Germany

from the anarchy to which she was rapidly drifting. On the other, the bloodshed which occurred during his quasi-dictatorship, and was attributed to his orders, aroused the same furious hatred of his name as that of Galliffet evoked among the survivors of the Paris Commune. In both cases it was a fight to a finish. How far he was directly responsible for the excesses committed by his troops, whether he overestimated the Spartakist danger, and whether it would have been possible to rescue the country from chaos by gentler measures, are questions which are discussed in his apologia and to which different answers are given by his friends and foes.

The first task of Noske, who was also commander of the forces in the Mark of Brandenburg under the Prussian Government, was to deal with the situation created by the refusal of Eichhorn to resign his post. Realising the weakness of the Government in the capital, he moved the headquarters of the General Staff to the safer anchorage of the suburbs, and called experienced officers to his aid. Till this moment the higher officers had vanished from the public gaze; but Noske's summons inaugurated a revival of their influence as the saviours of society. "The salvation of the Government," writes General Maercker, "came from a quarter which was as little expected as it was desired by its members, namely the officers' corps." It was a choice of evils, and any other supporter of the Directory, entrusted with the responsibility of defending the Government and maintaining order, would probably have acted in the same way. Attempts at mediation by the Minority Socialists broke down, and during the following days fierce fighting occurred in several quarters of the city. The offices of *Vorwärts* were stormed on 11th January, some of the three hundred persons found on the premises were brutally mishandled, and seven were shot out of hand. On the following day, with the storming of the Prefecture of Police, "Spartakus week" was at an end.

Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were arrested on

15th January and taken to the Eden Hotel in Charlottenburg, where they were briefly examined. As he was about to enter the motor which was to convey him to prison Liebknecht was struck violently over the head. When the car was passing through the Thiergarten it broke down, and he was ordered to alight. He attempted to escape, and when he refused to obey the command to halt he was shot. Such was the story of his escort ; but it was universally believed that he had been murdered in cold blood. A quarter of an hour later Rosa Luxemburg was in like manner attacked and almost killed as she was entering the car which was to convey her to prison. She was shot *en route*, and the body was thrown into a canal. These cowardly murders by men in uniform raised a revulsion of feeling against the Government which employed them, and which proceeded to commit a serious error of judgment in entrusting the inquiry, which was not held till May, to a military tribunal. Their violent end made martyrs of the Spartakist leaders. Liebknecht's egotism had begun to alienate many of his supporters ; but Rosa Luxemburg, though equally obsessed by the gospel of violence, was an unselfish and lovable woman.

The Workers' and Soldiers' Councils which had sprung up all over the country, though formed on Russian models, had for the most part little sympathy with the aims of the Bolshevists. Both the Berlin Council and the National Council were steadily on the side of the Government, and the demobilised soldiers took no part in the Spartakist game. Yet Socialists could not be expected to be satisfied with a purely political revolution, and as early as November the Directors had appointed a Commission, with Kautzky as chairman, to propose measures of socialisation. On 10th December the Commission published an interim report to the effect that the first task was the revival of production and foreign trade, and that in these fields no change of system could be contemplated

at present. Coal and iron should be among the first objects of socialisation. During the closing weeks of 1918 the Directors decreed various improvements of the workers' lot in maintenance of the unemployed, insurance, and working hours ; but they very honourably regarded themselves as trustees during the brief period of transition, and postponed ambitious economic changes till the soldiers came home and the National Assembly took over the reins. They have been blamed for not nationalising at any rate the key industries ; but they had no mandate to do anything of the kind, and such an operation is not so simple as it sounds. The country wanted peace and stability, not a Bolshevist dictatorship or a class war.

On 19th January, four days after the death of the Spartakist leaders, the elections to the National Assembly were held, without pressure from above or violence from beneath. Their results dispelled all lingering doubts as to the wishes of the nation. Of the thirty million adult men and women over twenty who voted, only two and one-third million supported the Independents, while eleven and a half million votes were cast for the Majority Socialists who had been savagely assailed as enemies of the people. The two Socialist parties polled together less than fourteen million votes, while the bourgeois parties received sixteen millions. The Centre polled six millions, the Democrats five and a half, the Conservatives (now known as the German National Party) three, the National Liberals (re-christened the German People's Party) one and a half. Owing to Proportional Representation the strength of the parties was reflected in the distribution of seats. The Majority Socialists numbered 163, the Independents 22, the Centre 88, the Democrats 77, the Nationalists 42, the National Liberals 21. With ten members of minor groups, there were 421 Deputies in the National Assembly. Its representative character was enhanced by the return of 36 women. The verdict was Left Centre.

The nation freely opted for order and progress, and gave short shrift either to the Extreme Right or the Extreme Left. The Catholics held their supporters, as they were expected to do ; but the National Liberals lost heavily to the Democrats. A Liberal vote of such dimensions had never been cast since the guns of Sadowa had pulverised the ideals of 1848. The elections held in the various States yielded very similar results.

The Directory, like good Democrats, obeyed the voice of the sovereign people, and on 4th February transferred its authority to the Constituent Assembly, which, by a wise decision, was summoned to Weimar instead of Berlin. Though by far the largest of the parties, the Majority Socialists possessed no majority, and a coalition was essential. After the tragic feuds of the winter months they could hardly turn to the Independents, who were few in number and would have scornfully repelled their advances. Their natural allies were the Democrats, whose support ensured a majority ; but at such a time the Government could not be too strong, and the Catholics joined the team. Ebert became President of the Republic, and Scheidemann formed a Ministry which included Brockdorf-Rantzau as Foreign Minister, Noske as Minister of Home Defence, Dernburg of Finance, Preuss of the Interior, Landsberg of Justice, Wissell of National Economy, and Bauer of Labour.

The programme, like the Government, was a compromise. In the opening debate Scheidemann threw the responsibility for the military *débâcle* on the Right, for troubles at home on the Left. He promised to garner the results of the Revolution ; but the policy of the Government turned out to be Liberal rather than Socialist. In foreign affairs it aimed at an early Wilson peace, participation in a League of Nations, disarmament, compulsory arbitration, open diplomacy ; in home affairs, democracy in the administration, the army, and the schools, public

control of monopolies, especially mines and power, the right of association, wage boards, and the taxation of war-profits. It was the philosophy of the Left Centre, not of the Left.

The Government was confronted with grave and baffling problems at home and abroad. The country had still to wait for some months before learning the victors' terms, and, meanwhile, the main task was to secure internal peace. The cessation of war industries and the demobilisation of the army created a mass of unemployment, while the continuance of the blockade and the progressive depreciation of the mark raised prices and multiplied strikes. These unavoidable difficulties were complicated by the activities of the Spartakist movement, which was scotched but not killed, and which perpetuated the unhappy dependence of the Ministry on the professional soldiers. "Noske was the man who helped us," writes an officer in Ehrhard's marine brigade. "He put the right men in the right military posts, gave them complete authority and plenty of money for their work. We were never sworn in. We were spared that notorious oath to the Constitution, or we never gave it, although it was asked of us by the Government."[1] When the officers realised that the Government depended on their support, the counter-revolution had begun, and the control of the German Republic passed from the manual workers to the bourgeoisie.

The Government found itself at loggerheads not only with the Spartakists, but with other sections of the world of labour. In the middle of January the miners and metal-workers of the Ruhr called a general strike and appointed a Commission of Nine, representing both Socialist parties and the Communists, to take over the Westphalian coal industry. In the middle of February a general strike throughout Westphalia was proclaimed, and the men declined to produce coal unless the Government took steps to nationalise

[1] R. Mann, *Mit Ehrhard durch Deutschland.*

the mines. The Government replied by sending Noske and his troops, who, after meeting with slight resistance, dissolved the Commission of Nine. Discontent was temporarily assuaged by a rise of wages, which was soon nullified by the fall of the mark. Sporadic outbreaks also occurred in other parts of the country. Early in February a section of the Bremen workers, realising that the blockade was fanning the flames of revolt, forbade the unloading of foodstuffs, but were coerced by a flying column. Weimar itself was for a moment isolated by railway strikes. Revolutionary fires burned in the Thuringian towns and in Halle, which were suppressed by General Maercker, the military agent of Noske's will.

Far more formidable was the fighting in Berlin during the opening days of March, which surpassed the horrors of "Spartakus week." On 5th March a general strike was proclaimed for economic reasons by the Trade Unions, with the support of all the Socialist parties. When the Communists pressed for its extension to water, gas, electricity, and food supply, the Majority Socialists withdrew, and the strike was called off. The city, however, was full of rowdy elements, and on the day of the strike a warehouse was plundered in the Alexanderplatz. The Marine Division was called on to restore order; but a shot which appeared to be fired from the neighbouring Prefecture of Police was the signal for a confused and savage struggle. After shots had been exchanged between the Marine Division and the Prefecture, a portion of the former and of the Republican Guard, which had been created by Wels to suppress Eichhorn's militia, were joined by civilians and entrenched themselves in the eastern districts of the city. Noske had long considered the Marine Division to be unreliable, and the Republican Guard enjoyed little confidence with the Government.

The Freicorps, or Government troops, came into action with cannon, aeroplanes, and bombs. Though

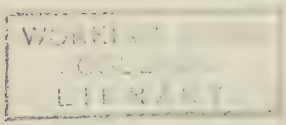
the outbreak was not the work of the Spartakists, Noske announced on 8th March that he was fighting Spartakism. Sixty police, he added, had been murdered by Red Guards in the Lichtenberg suburb. "The cruelty of the Spartakist methods of fighting compels me to issue the order that any person who is taken with arms, fighting against the Government troops, is to be shot forthwith." The story of the sixty policemen inflamed popular sentiment, and several of the Spartakist leaders and of the Republican Guard were shot. The insurgents were at no time numerous, and were quickly suppressed by the well-armed Government troops. The Naval Division and Republican Guard were disbanded, and no more was heard of the Spartakists in Berlin. When all was over, the Mayor of Lichtenberg stated that not more than five police had met their death; that it was unknown whether they were killed in the fighting or were shot in cold blood; and that others were kidnapped by Spartakists but set free. The number of casualties exceeded a thousand, and protests against Noske's iron hand arose not only from the ranks of Labour, but from the bourgeoisie. "The policy of the Government," complained the *Vossische Zeitung*, "bears a terrifying resemblance to the old regime." It seemed, indeed, as if the saviour of society was passing from the defensive to the offensive, and men began to ask if he was the master or the tool of the Officers' Corps. Power had indeed already slipped from the grasp of the working-classes; and when the second and final Congress of Councils met at Berlin its title to speak for the people had passed to the Weimar Assembly. It was in vain that the Independents renewed their demand for the rule of the Councils. The revolutionary era was nearing its end, and the proceedings of the Congress attracted little more attention than those of a debating society.

A month later a Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Munich. Eisner had been an avowed foe not only of

the Majority Socialists but of the Spartakists. "We have formed Councils," he had announced, "but we are not Bolshevists either in aims or in methods." With his murder on 21st February, the Bavarian ship entered troubled waters. Eisner had realised that his dictatorship had few supporters, and had consented to summon the Diet. In revenge for his murder two bourgeois deputies were murdered, and Auer, a Majority Socialist Minister, was seriously wounded. The Diet dispersed, the Central Council, representing all shades of Socialist opinion, took over the reins, and a Socialist Ministry was formed under Hoffmann, a Majority Socialist, with the aid of the Independents. Since the Diet contained a bourgeois majority, the Government was only a stopgap, and both Right and Left began to make plans for a fresh revolution. On 3rd April a meeting of Majority Socialists at Augsburg demanded the declaration of a Soviet Republic. On 4th April a conference was held at the War Office in Munich between certain of the Ministers and the executive of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. The Communists were summoned and informed that a Soviet Republic would be proclaimed, in which the portfolios would be equally divided among Majority Socialists, Independents, and Communists. The latter inquired as to the views of the Government, and were informed that it would recognise a *fait accompli*; but they suspected treachery and held aloof. The Independents were induced to join by Schneppenhorst, the Minister of War, who himself took no office in the new Government, which was proclaimed on 6th April; and he was afterwards accused of provoking a revolution in order to rally support for the Hoffmann Government. Hoffmann and his colleagues fled to Bamberg; troops hurried from Prussia and Württemberg; and Noske declared that accounts must be settled with the lunatics of Munich, even if it cost blood. The alarm was increased by the simultaneous seizure of power by Bela Kun at Budapest, and horror was aroused by the cold-blooded murder of ten bour-

geois hostages. The new Government was able to offer little opposition ; but nearly two hundred soldiers and civilians, including Levine, the Communist leader, a Russian Jew, were court-martialled and shot. The Hoffmann Government returned to Munich ; but the brief interregnum burned itself into the memory of the bourgeoisie, inspired the creation of volunteer corps, and transformed Munich into the headquarters of monarchist and militarist reaction.

Encouraged by the example of Munich, Brunswick established a Council's Republic, which was in like manner overthrown by Government troops. By the summer of 1919 the revolutionary movement of the Extreme Left was broken. Economic discontent, however, continued to find expression, and Noske, who was bent on a fight to a finish with the forces of disorder, created the Technische Nothilfe, a strike-breaking corps of engineers. Labour critics of "the Noske era" charged him not only with the restoration of the capitalistic bourgeoisie but with causing the death of fifteen thousand workers ; and they prophesied that, when the champions of the old regime had with his assistance regained a measure of their power, they would strike both at the Revolution and the Republic and would cast their tool contemptuously aside.



CHAPTER IX

THE CONSTITUTION

GERMAN democracy, which was born in the trenches and inspired the Revolution, found permanent expression in the Weimar Constitution.[1] Since the German people had won their liberty it was for them alone, not for a special class or a single party, to determine how they should be governed. As the French National Assembly had sought refuge at Versailles in 1871 from the smouldering embers of the Commune, so the Constitutent Assembly was summoned to the German Athens, where Goethe counted for more than Bismarck, and where North and South might meet on equal terms. The making of a Constitution by a popular assembly after a war and a revolution is under any circumstances a serious affair, and the precedent of France pointed to years of discussion and intrigue. It is to the credit of the Weimar Assembly that its principal task was performed in five months ; that the debates were helpful and good-tempered ; that the Socialists co-operated amicably with the bourgeoisie ; that the balance between continuity and innovation was skilfully maintained ; and that the finished article proved the reality of the conversion of the large majority of a great nation to the principles and practices of democratic government.

The foundations of the new constitutional edifice had been laid by Hugo Preuss, Professor of Constitutional Law in the Handelshochschule of Berlin and, since the Revolution, Minister of the Interior. He had been commissioned by the Government to draw up an outline, and his plan was published on the day after the elections. The power and ingenuity of the draft were recognised on all hands, and the authors of the Constitution in its final form were its obvious debtors. In his conviction

[1] The best introduction is by H. Oppenheimer, *The Constitution of the German Republic*. The best treatises are Wittmeyer, *Die Weimarer Reichsverfassung*, and Vermeil, *La Constitution de Weimar*. Cp. *Handbuch der Politik*, vol. 3.

that the institutions of the Republic should be broad-based upon the people's will, the learned professor, a Democrat in politics, shared to the full the aspirations of the country ; but in his determination to break with the past he had travelled faster than public opinion was inclined to follow him. Germany had been united on a federal basis, and the problem of the division of power between the Federal Government and the constituent States, which had presented formidable difficulties to Bismarck, confronted his successors in a new form. As a well-informed publicist, Preuss was aware of the tendency of the Central Government in federal communities to increase its power in the interest of national strength and efficiency ; and he therefore proposed to concentrate authority in the Reich to an extent that the unitary State came almost within sight. He described his draft as a vigorous offensive in favour of unity, and indeed the States were to survive merely as autonomous administrative bodies. His stoutest blows were aimed at the predominant partner in the firm. Imperial Germany, he considered, had been top-heavy, a federal *façade* barely concealing the stark realities of Prussian hegemony. To avert the revival of this dangerous anomaly, he proposed that States should be split up at the demand of a majority on the ground of racial, historic, social, or economic differences. The Reich would thus for the first time be supreme, not only over the States of the south and the west but over Prussia herself ; and the smaller States would, in this manner, be reconciled to the increase of the Federal authority.

Neither extreme centralisation of authority nor the dismemberment of Prussia found favour, and the Preuss offensive provoked a counter-offensive from the States. The Government accordingly convened a Consultative Committee in which the larger units were represented by two delegates, the smaller by one. Taking the Preuss scheme as a basis of its deliberations, the Committee elaborated what was known as the Government draft, and presented it to the Assembly. The States were to

retain various powers, of which they were deprived by Preuss, and nothing more was heard of the break up of Prussia. After four days' debate on its general features, it was referred to a Committee presided over by Haussmann, a respected Democrat, consisting of twenty-eight members, chosen from the political parties in proportion to their strength. Three months later the Committee presented to the Assembly the result of its sittings, which owed much both to the outlines of Preuss and to the Government draft, but steered a middle path between the unitary temper of the one and the particularist atmosphere of the other.

The Constituent Assembly took its duties very seriously, and in a Second Reading debate of seven days the principles of the Committee's plan were exhaustively discussed. During July no less than fourteen sittings were devoted to an examination of every line and every word. The third reading only required three days, and the finished product came into force a fortnight later on 14th August 1919. The discussions had been carried on with German thoroughness. The Weimar Constitution which was voted on 31st July was different from the Preuss draft, the Government plan, and the scheme of the Committee, while owing much to each in turn. It was the work of the nation, not of a single class, a dominant party, or a master mind. "Born in suffering," declared Haussmann, "it is the law of a people oppressed by the enemy. It is therefore necessary to concentrate all the forces of the nation, and to realise German unity in a definitive manner." The task was carried out with courage and skill, and the authors of the Constitution deserved the gratitude of their countrymen.

If we are to understand its nature we must realise that it was a compromise not only between parties but between economic, religious, and territorial interests. On the morrow of the Revolution the old political groups took stock of the situation, and some of them changed their name. Beginning with the Right, the

Conservatives emerged as Nationalists, appealing to a wider circle than to the landed interest, and catering for all in town or country who desired either to restore the Bismarckian system or to save as much of it as possible from the wreck. Their policy in the debates, accordingly, was to demand extensive powers for the President of the Republic and to limit the authority of the Reichstag. The National Liberals reappeared under the title of the People's Party, and continued to represent big industry, commerce, and finance. Like the Nationalists, they desired the restoration of the dynasties, but without at first indulging in royalist propaganda. While the former brooded most over the loss of national power, the latter lamented, above all, the loss of national prosperity. They stood for the system of capitalistic enterprise, and were the strongest opponents of Socialism in theory or practice. The two parties of the Right, though few in numbers, worked together and left their impress on the Constitution.

The key position under the new dispensation, as under the old, was occupied by the Centrum, which saw no need to change its name. For two generations it had polled the votes of Catholic Germany, and the last election showed that its hold was undiminished. Indeed, its vote increased from sixteen per cent. of the total in 1912 to twenty per cent. in 1920. Since its basis was ecclesiastical, not political, it had no difficulty in accepting the Republic, though it would have preferred the constitutional monarchy which seemed to have been inaugurated under Prince Max. Though it realised that a further measure of centralisation was due, it championed the claims of the States, for its impregnable base was Bavaria. Its hopes were centred in the Church and the school, and its interventions in the constitutional debates were governed by the defence of its confessional interests.

No party took such an active or decisive part in the framing of the Constitution as the Democrats, who counted among their numbers Preuss, the Minister

in charge, Haussmann, the Chairman of the Committee, Naumann, the orator of the Assembly, and Schücking, the eminent jurist. After the Revolution the Freisinnige, or individualistic Radicals, reconstituted themselves as the Democratic Party, and their poll of five and a half millions was the surprise of the election. The Liberal revival was no less remarkable in the State elections. Among their supporters were the professional classes, the petty bourgeoisie, and the non-Socialist workmen of the Hirsch-Duncker Trade Unions ; and on this occasion they received a large number of votes which had previously gone to the National Liberals. The middle classes had moved towards the Left, and the Democrats were the beneficiaries of the operation. Almost without exception they would have been satisfied with constitutional monarchy ; but, now that the Republic was established, they shared with the Socialists the main responsibility for its defence.

The Majority Socialists were scarcely less active than the Democrats in determining the main features of the new regime. Their traditions and principles led them to champion the Reich against the States, to arm the Reichstag against encroachments from the President or from rival bodies, and to vindicate the right of the manual worker to a larger share in the control of the economic machine. On the extreme Left sat the Independents, still wedded to their faith in the Councils, more interested in the social revolution than political change, but agreeing with the Majority in exalting the power of the Reichstag. Of the six parties, however, none exerted so little influence on the making of the Constitution as the small intransigent body of Independents.

The brief Preamble strikes a note of democratic idealism which echoes through the 181 articles. " This Constitution has been framed by the German people, at one in its branches, and animated by the desire to renew and to establish its Federation on the solid

bases of liberty and justice, to serve the cause of peace both within and without, and to promote social progress."

The Constitution as a whole is governed by the two categorical sentences which compose Article 1. "The German Federation is a Republic. Supreme power emanates from the people." The nail which is thus struck firmly on the head is driven home in Article 17. "Every State must have a Republican Constitution. The representatives of the people must be elected by the universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage of all German subjects, men and women, in accordance with the principle of proportional representation. Each State Government requires the confidence of the State Parliament." By a later Article the age for exercising the Federal franchise is fixed at twenty, though in law citizens only come of age at twenty-one. By these pregnant sentences the restoration of any of the thrones overturned by the Revolution is rendered impossible without the violation or amendment of the Constitution. There were plenty of monarchists at Weimar in 1919, as there were large numbers of Royalists at Versailles before 1875; but in both cases they were powerless to prevent the establishment of Republican institutions. The break with the Empire was emphasised by the change of flag. While the Right naturally desired to retain black, white, red, and the Socialists pined for their favourite colour alone, it was finally agreed to revive the black, red, gold, of the Deutscher Bund. The commercial flag remained unchanged, with the new colours in the upper corner.

In reference to the vexed question of Federal authority, the Weimar Constitution steers a middle course between the Preuss plan and the Bismarckian system. Bismarck had to pay for the acceptance of the Empire by the South German rulers; and the choice of a title for the King of Prussia as German Emperor, not Emperor of Germany, the concession

of privileges to Bavaria and Württemberg, and the monopoly of the right of direct taxation by the States were part of the price. The personal and dynastic jealousies, the rivalry of the Wittelsbachs and the Hohenzollerns, had been swept into the rubbish-heap by the broom of the Revolution ; and the mere fact of the substitution of an impersonal Republic for a Prussianised Empire enabled the central power to claim an enlargement of its sphere. The diminished status of the Federal unit is reflected in the substitution of the term "Land" for "State." Federal law, declares Article 13, overrides State law, and differences of opinion are referred to the Supreme Federal Court at Leipzig. The Reich may even alter the boundaries of a State or create a new one. The most important of the new powers attributed to the Federal Government, largely owing to the influence of Erzberger, is that of direct taxation ; but in claiming sources of revenue which hitherto belonged to the States the Reich is enjoined to pay due regard to the financial vitality of its component parts. The Reich is also instructed to take over the railways, thus reaching at a bound the goal which Bismarck had sought in vain. In like manner Bavaria and Württemberg surrendered control of posts and telegraphs. This limitation of State rights went far to justify the complaint that the States had shrunk into provinces ; but the centripetal forces were irresistible. The Reich, as it emerged from the deliberations of the Weimar Assembly, was neither unitary nor Federal, but a composite, decentralised organism. The constitutional history of Germany reveals steady progress towards unification. As the Bund was an advance on the Holy Roman Empire, so the Republic was an advance on the Empire of 1871.

In the electoral machinery of the Reich the chief novelties are proportional representation and woman suffrage. If it was essential for every adult citizen to have a share in the Government, it was no less

essential to prevent the tyranny of a chance majority. The country was accordingly divided up into large constituencies; and if the number of voters for a particular party in such an electoral unit was too small to claim a member for themselves, their votes were added to similar minorities in other areas, so that from the *Reichsliste* thus constituted one or more representatives might be returned. "It is the most just of systems," declared Naumann, "but you will have a miserable time of changing coalitions." His warning fell on deaf ears, for the authors of the Constitution were determined that the Reichstag should reflect with meticulous accuracy the mind of the electorate. The extension of the suffrage to women was recognised to be involved in democracy, and their share in the activities and sufferings of the war swept away lingering prejudices in Germany no less than in England.

In the higher circles of the new system the principal change is the substitution of an elected President for a hereditary Emperor. In approaching the difficult task of determining the powers of the Supreme Magistrate, the pundits of Weimar closely studied the models of France and the United States. In the former case the President is chosen by the two Chambers in joint session, and possesses only the shadow of power. In the latter he is chosen by the whole electorate, and rules the country for four years. Neither of these widely differing systems was adopted in its entirety; but the German President is far closer to Paris than to Washington. He is, indeed, "elected by the whole German people"; but in all other important respects the men of Weimar have followed the men of Versailles. He is chosen for seven years and may be re-elected. A series of articles sets forth his powers, among them the supreme command of the army. But the eagle cannot soar, for his wings are clipped by Article 50. "All orders and decrees of the President, including those of the Reichswehr,

in order to be valid, must be countersigned by the Federal Chancellor or by the competent Federal Minister. Such counter-signature implies assumption of responsibility." The German President, like the French, can summon any one he likes to form a Ministry; but no Chancellor can live for twenty-four hours without the active or passive support of the Reichstag. Under the Empire, as Laband declared, sovereignty resided in the Federated Governments. Under the Republic, sovereignty resides in the electorate and in the Reichstag, which reflects its unchallengeable will. The President is a symbol of unity and continuity, a master of the ceremonies, a wheel in the constitutional machine. If he possesses tact and inspires confidence he may play a useful part in turning awkward corners, in composing quarrels, in solving ministerial crises, in building up the prestige of the Republic, in regaining for his countrymen the good will of the world, in fortifying the heart of his countrymen in times of adversity. But politically he is a cipher. Dynastic autocracy was swept away by the revolutionary flood, and republican autocracy is ruled out by the Constitution, which empowers the Reichstag in the last resort to ordain a plebiscite to secure his deposition. In arguing against any President at all the Independents found themselves alone; and there can be little doubt that the Constitution is as successful in enabling the chief magistrate to do good as in preventing him from doing harm.

The Weimar Constitution is often described as the most democratic in the world, and among the hallmarks of full-blooded democracy is usually reckoned Single Chamber government. The Reichsrat has taken the place of the Bundesrat, and the new body has as little claim to the title of a Second Chamber as the old. There is, indeed, a close resemblance in form between the two, for the Reichsrat, like its predecessor, embodies the Federal idea. The States are still represented by members of their own governments,

and the precautions against Prussian predominance are maintained. No single State may have more than two-fifths of the total number of votes, and by an ingenious innovation half of the Prussian votes are assigned to the provincial administrations. Each State is entitled to at least one vote, and the larger units may send one delegate for every 700,000 inhabitants. Thus, while the numbers of the Bundesrat were fixed, those of the Reichsrat fluctuate with the ebb and flow of population as established by the latest census.

The real change is in the powers, not in the composition, of the Reichsrat. The Bundesrat was a thing of flesh and blood representing as it did the governments and dynasties in whom sovereignty resided, and therefore superior both in authority and prestige to the Reichstag. Its successor represents governments who are, in the last resort, subject to the dictation of the Federal ballot-box. The Government is bound to keep it informed on Federal affairs; but in the machinery of legislation it plays a minor part and is rather a consultative than a legislative Chamber. Before introducing a Bill the Government must ask its consent, and, if it is refused, must explain to the Reichstag the divergence of view. In like manner, if the Reichsrat adopts a Bill which the Government disapproves, the latter must introduce the Bill to the Reichstag, explaining at the same time its own point of view. The Reichsrat may also protest against laws passed by the Reichstag, in which case the law is referred back. If the two bodies cannot agree, the President may order a referendum. If the Reichstag supports the law by a two-thirds majority after receiving the protest of the Reichsrat, the President must either promulgate it within three months or submit it to a referendum. That the President would thus call for a referendum on a measure passed by a large majority of the Elected Chamber is extremely improbable; and thus the constitutional privilege of a suspensive veto on legislation

could only be exercised in cases where a measure had been passed by a bare majority. The Reichstag is the senior partner; but behind the Reichstag, as behind the President, stands the sovereign people. The framers of the Constitution accepted the doctrine of checks and balances, and regarded the division of power as the guarantee of liberty. The referendum may be employed not merely for removing differences between the Reichstag and the Reichsrat, but for checking the legislative activities of the majority in the Reichstag. The promulgation of a law must be postponed on the demand of one-third of its members, unless the Reichstag and the Reichsrat, in spite of such a demand, declare it to be urgent, in which case the President may dispense with the referendum. The referendum, moreover, even if the President allows it, is only to take place on the demand of one-twentieth of the electorate. The electors may also be called in to pronounce on a bill on the petition of one-tenth of their numbers; but if the bill is passed by the Reichstag without amendment no referendum may be held.

The Constitution naturally includes machinery for its amendment, and the process is far less cumbrous than in the United States. Resolutions of the Reichstag in favour of a change require the presence of two-thirds of the total membership and the support of two-thirds of those present. Resolutions of the Reichsrat similarly require a two-thirds majority of the votes actually cast. If a referendum, initiated by petition, is held, a majority of the total electorate is required. If the Reichstag decides for an amendment of the Constitution to which the Reichsrat objects, the Reichsrat may demand a referendum.

After the structure and tasks of the Reich have thus been set forth, the second part of the Constitution deals with Fundamental Rights. The formulation of *Grundrechte* had occupied a good deal of the time of the members of the Frankfurt Parliament, and their work

was used as a model by their successors. While a minority considered them superfluous, the majority welcomed them as a confession of faith, a declaration of solidarity with the humane ideas of the modern world. Naumann, the eloquent idealist, urged that they should be presented as aphorisms, so that they might become "the political Bible of the people." In times of revolution, he argued, it was good to proclaim general truths. It was indeed a wise decision, for since the Frankfurt Parliament the political education of the people had been sadly neglected, and the citizen had been dwarfed by the omnipotent State. Some of the provisions were borrowed from earlier Constitutions, some from the programmes of parties, some from the German Code, while for others the Weimar legislators were themselves responsible. Though collectively described as Fundamental Rights, the obligations of citizenship are not forgotten. A more correct title would be Rights and Duties. If the first part of the Constitution creates a *Volksstaat,* the second ordains a *Rechtsstaat.* The Sovereignty of the People is supplemented and consecrated by the Rights of Man.

In the clauses devoted to the *Grundrechte* by the Weimar Assembly are mirrored many of the changes of thought and feeling which produced or sprang from the Revolution of 1918. If the dominant note of the constitutional edifice is political self-government, the keynote of the Fundamental Rights is the worth of the individual. In reading these philosophic axioms and categorical imperatives we are transported back to the generous inspirations of 1848. A Liberal breeze is blowing again. The reign of the Great Leviathan is ended. The State is no longer a Moloch to which society and the individual may alike be sacrificed, but a method of organisation, a utilitarian expedient. In the scales of the Weimar Constitution the State and the citizen hang level in the air, each supreme in its own allotted sphere. The stoutest champions of the *Grundrechte* were the Catholics and the Socialists, the former

coveting the protection of minorities, the latter aiming at the protection of labour.

In the first section, entitled "The Individual," we realise at once that we are breathing a purer atmosphere. "Men and women have in principle the same political rights and duties. Privileges and disadvantages of birth and rank within the sphere of public law are to be abolished. Titles of nobility are considered to form part of the name only, and may not be conferred. Orders and decorations may not be conferred by the State." At these resonant blasts from the democratic trumpet the old system of social privilege, *Hoffähigkeit*, and anti-Semitic disabilities crumbles into dust. In the following articles we are aware that an attempt is being made to substitute the Anglo-Saxon ideal of the rule of law for the continental practice of *Droit Administratif*. If the Englishman can boast that his home is his castle, the German may now quote the Constitution for the axiom that "the residence of every German is a sanctuary for him and inviolable." There is no censorship except on the ground of public morals; the secrecy of letters, telegrams, and telephones is inviolable; persons in custody must be informed, within a day of their arrest, by what authority and for what reasons they have been deprived of their liberty, and must at once be enabled to raise objections. These privileges are not confined to German-speaking citizens, for the racial minorities are henceforth to enjoy equal rights. "Non-German-speaking sections of the people are not to be interfered with, either by legislation or administration, in their free national development, least of all in the use of their native tongue in education, in home affairs, and in the administration of justice." Some critics, remembering that the Treaty of Versailles deprived Germany of the vast majority of her citizens of alien speech, may be tempted to exclaim that this is locking the stable door after the steed has flown; but some are left, and the Weimar Fathers were well-advised in thus repudiating the regime which made the

racial minorities of the Empire feel like helots in the land of their birth.

The sections on Religion and Education bear no less eloquent witness to the atmospheric change. The State Church, at once a pillar and a tool of the monarchical system, is swept away, and every religious body is to control its own affairs. Henceforth the Churches were to be neither official nor private bodies, but " corporations of public law," empowered to levy contributions from their members. The change which was deplored by the Conservatives was hailed as an emancipation by Naumann. " The territorial Church —*cujus regio, ejus religio*—has ceased to exist. Henceforth the Protestant Church is its own master. It will escape from stagnation, and become national and popular." The forecast was to prove unduly optimistic ; but Naumann had, at any rate, grasped the truth that Churches in the modern world have the best chance of winning spiritual influence if they are allowed a fair field and no favour.

After the *Volkskirche* the *Volksschule*. In the sphere of education important changes are introduced which reflect the two dominating principles of the Constitution —democracy and centralisation. Private preparatory schools are abolished, and during the first years of school life all classes sit on the same benches. Moreover, a new spirit is to permeate the classroom. " In every school the educational aims must be moral training, public spirit, personal and vocational fitness, and, above all, the cultivation of German national character and of the spirit of international reconciliation. In public-school teaching care is to be taken not to wound the susceptibilities of those holding different opinions. Politics and civics and technical education are subjects of instruction. When leaving school, each pupil receives a copy of the Constitution." The fathers of the Constitution, we observe, are no less conscious than their predecessors of the practical importance of the school ; but the curriculum is enlarged and softer breezes are to

play around the heads of the young citizens of the Republic. The administrative autonomy of the States remains ; but the general principles and tendencies of education are regarded as too important to be left to the discretion of the federal units, and remain under the supreme control of the Reich. It is scarcely necessary to remark that these clauses were in the main the work of Socialist hands.

The final section of the Second Part is entitled " Economic Life," and it is here that the Revolution has left its deepest mark. During the gestation of the Constitution the Socialists were the largest party in the State ; but they never possessed a majority, and of Socialism in the technical sense there is little trace. Entails are terminated ; the unearned increment in the value of land is to be utilised for the benefit of the community ; private royalties are to be transferred to the State ; private undertakings suitable for socialisation may be converted, subject to compensation, into social property. The Reich may assign to itself, to the States, or to local communities a share in the management of economic enterprises. " Furthermore, in case of urgent need, it may provide for the compulsory formation of self-governing syndicates out of economic undertakings with a view to their management on social lines, in order to secure the co-operation of all productive sections of the community and the participation of employers and employed in the management, and to regulate on principles of social economy the production, manufacture, distribution, uses and prices, as well as the import and export, of economic commodities." Here is every sign of a drawn battle between the Socialists and the bourgeoisie. The powers enumerated are inherent in all sovereign bodies, and the enunciation of a right to take action under vaguely defined circumstances does not bring such action within the range of practical politics. There was no majority in the Assembly or in the country for a policy of economic Socialism, and the framers of the Constitution loyally

recognised the fact by leaving their successors to choose their own path.

Though the Constitution failed to bring Socialism into the foreground of the picture, an important decision was announced in Article 165, the last and longest of all. An imposing democratic structure had been erected; but political emancipation cannot satisfy the working-classes in the twentieth century. The frontier between politics and economics, never very substantial, has been broken down, and governments find much of their work and most of their worries in the industrial sphere. The framers of the Weimar Constitution, accordingly, in the most original portion of their constructive work, determined to create a network of functional bodies representing the industrial life of the country, smoothing the friction between capital and labour, and supplying expert advice on the technical questions which confront modern communities. When Bismarck inaugurated his gigantic scheme of State-aided insurance in 1881, he instituted an Economic Council for Prussia to advise him. The Council, consisting of seventy-five members, met in 1881, 1882, 1884, and 1887, and rendered valuable service; but his proposal to establish an Economic Council for the Empire by adding fifty members to the seventy-five members of the Prussian body was defeated. The scheme was now revived, not merely for the purposes of securing expert information, but as a symbol and instrument of social peace.

"Employees are called upon to co-operate on an equal footing with employers in the regulation of wages and the conditions of labour, as well as in the general development of the productive forces." For this purpose statutory bodies, representative of the workers, are to be instituted for the protection of their social and economic interests. Works' Councils are to be formed in the factories. District Workers' Councils are to join with representatives of employers and other interested sections to form District Economic Councils. Finally, a Federal Workers' Council is to join with the repre-

sentatives of employers and all important occupational groups in a Federal Economic Council " for the accomplishment of economic tasks in general, and in particular to collaborate in the execution of the socialisation laws." To the latter body important economic measures must be submitted for an expression of its opinion before being introduced into the Reichstag. The Council may itself initiate bills, which the Government, even if unable to support them, is bound to present to the Reichstag. Here was the outline of a hierarchy of associations, in which industrial questions could be threshed out by those directly concerned, and whose conclusions would command respect from the responsible political authorities.

Though written constitutions never produce all the benefits which are expected of them by their authors, the Weimar scheme has worked as well as most. To this result no factor has more largely contributed than the tact of President Ebert, who has filled the highest office in the State with simple dignity, and has won the confidence not only of his countrymen, but of the ex-enemy Powers. The prestige of the Chancellor has naturally declined since the spacious days of the Empire, and the necessity of possessing the support of the Reichstag tends to confine the choice to men whose position as party leaders, rather than their personal abilities, marks them out for promotion. With the exception of Erzberger and Rathenau, both of whom fell victims to the fanaticism of the Extreme Right, the ministers of the Republic have lacked stature, though neither capacity nor goodwill. The Reichstag has naturally focussed political interest on itself, and it has shown no sign of abusing its powers. The deliberations of the Reichsrat have attracted little interest, and to onlookers it sometimes appears like a fifth wheel to the coach. The electorate has shown its appreciation of adult suffrage by polling a very high proportion of its strength. The Referendum and Initiative, which

are kept in reserve for constitutional emergencies, have not yet been employed. The system of Proportional Representation secures an accurate reflection of the mind of the country ; but the excessive size of the constituencies prevents personal contact with the candidates, and the power of the machine is increased by the system of party lists, in which the elector votes for a *bloc* instead of for an individual. The lament frequently heard among the parties of the Right that the Government is too weak for its task is a complaint less against the Weimar Constitution than against the division of opinion and interests which inevitably involves coalition and compromise. For Germany contains friends and foes of the old regime ; champions and opponents of centralisation ; Protestants and Catholics ; individualists and socialists.

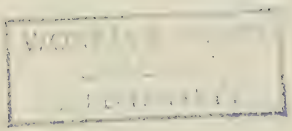
The Revolution necessitated new constitutions in the States no less than in the Reich. At the end of 1918 decrees were issued by the Provisional Governments for the election of constituent assemblies by adult suffrage ; and the results were very similar to those of the election to the Weimar Assembly—a coalition of the Left in the southern States, and Socialist rule in the north. There was a widespread disposition to postpone the drafting of new constitutions till the Reich provided a model ; but certain units declined to wait. In February 1919 Hesse issued an avowedly provisional constitution. Baden followed suit in March, and Württemberg in May, when the first draft of the Weimar legislation was known. In the case of Württemberg an amended constitution was adopted after the completion of the Weimar scheme.

The units of the Empire presented a rich variety of constitutional forms, which they could vary at their will. The units of the Republic, on the other hand, were allowed a very limited freedom of choice ; for Article 17 of the Constitution demanded from every member of the Reich republican forms, adult

suffrage, the ballot, proportional representation, and responsible government. This standardisation was prompted by painful memories of the disharmony between the parliamentary systems of Prussia and the Empire. Though Article 17 did not explicitly ordain single chambers, an Upper House was implicitly ruled out by the prohibition of any but universal suffrage; for it was useless to set up a second body elected in the same manner as the first. If, however, in every case the Landtag was a single chamber, there was little ground for fear of rash action, since its competence was narrowly limited from above. It was, indeed, little more than a provincial Diet; for, though it could legislate, even the legislative field was hedged in on all sides. Though it fixed the expenditure, it mainly depended for its income on the share of direct taxation assigned to it by the Reich; and the payment of State officials, the main item in the budget, was in large measure decided by the wage-rates of the Federal officials. The example of the Reich was usually followed in allowing the franchise at the age of twenty; but the constitutions of Bavaria, Baden, and Hesse provide that candidates for the Landtag should be not less than twenty-five years old. Though the Constitution imposes no limitation on the subject, none of the States has chosen to appoint a President.

The South German States had been on the whole contented with their constitutions under the Empire; but the bourgeoisie accepted the change in order to keep step with the north, where the old system had become impossible, and to avoid a collision with the working-class. The smooth functioning of the new system was facilitated by the fact that many of the party leaders sat both in the Reichstag and in their own Landtag. Of all the Federal units Bavaria alone was thoroughly dissatisfied, craving for the restoration of her Wittelsbach monarchy, resenting the loss of her *Sonderrechte*, and detesting Prussia as the land of

free-thinkers, socialists, and Jews. Her geographical position, however, cut off from the sea, and her lack of coal, made it impossible for her to stand alone ; and though a few voices were raised for union with Austria, the majority of Bavarians desired to remain within the Reich, hoping that the Weimar Constitution might one day be modified. The only territorial change has been the grouping of the miniature Ernestine Duchies into a Federal unit under the name of Thuringia. The incorporation of Austria, envisaged by Article 2, and for a time eagerly desired both at Vienna and Berlin, was vetoed by France.



CHAPTER X

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

THE terms of the Armistice, which was concluded for a month, were extremely severe; but they were not more onerous than was to be expected from victorious Powers who had no intention of allowing the enemy to renew the terrible struggle.[1] The occupation of the Rhineland and the retention of prisoners were not less inevitable than the surrender of munitions and machinery, aeroplanes and ships. The only important concession obtained by Erzberger in his discussions with Foch was the promise to allow the import of foodstuffs despite the continuance of the blockade.

The Armistice was renewed for a month, when Erzberger, who was invited by the new Government to continue in control of the negotiations, met Foch at Trier in the middle of December. To the General's remonstrance that the deliveries were in arrears, the German plenipotentiary replied that he had warned him at Compiègne that the time was too short, and in his turn complained that the promised supply of food had not begun. The two men met again in the middle of January, when the same charges were made on both sides, and Erzberger begged for the return of the prisoners and a preliminary peace. On this occasion the General agreed to allow German merchant ships to be employed in the transport of food under the supervision of the Allies. A third and final meeting took place at Trier in the middle of February, when Erzberger renewed his complaints at the retention of prisoners and the withholding of food, and Foch demanded the cessation of the German "offensive" against the Poles. The General's demands for what seemed to the German Government a surrender to the

[1] See Erzberger, *Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg*, ch. 24; Brockdorff-Rantzau, *Dokumente*; *History of the Peace Conference*, ed. Temperley; *Materialien betreffend die Friedensverhandlungen*; Rothbarth, *Die Grossen Vier am Werk*.

Poles in the eastern marches of the Reich led to a hurried consultation between the Cabinet and the party leaders. The Foreign Minister, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, urged summary rejection of demands which appeared to travel far beyond the original Armistice terms ; but he was overruled on the cogent ground that defiance involved invasion. His offer of resignation was not pressed, but the discussion revealed the cleavage which was before long to break up the Ministry. On this occasion the Armistice was not renewed for a definite term, but simply prolonged, subject to three days' notice ; and in this form it continued till the conclusion of peace. " I assume," wrote the Foreign Minister to Scheidemann, " that Wilson, true to his programme, will do his best to prevent Germany's position among the peoples being reduced to a cipher." His first public declaration left no doubt as to his attitude. " I shall negotiate and conclude a peace of right," he announced on 2nd January ; " a peace of force, annihilation, and enslavement I reject. We have made the Fourteen Points the basis of settlement, and we will adhere to them."

On 14th February Brockdorff-Rantzau explained his policy to the National Assembly in a considered declaration which was intended as much for the Big Four as for his fellow-countrymen. " They can apply force to us, but they cannot force us to recognise force as law. They have tried to squeeze from us, by threats of renewing hostilities, sacrifices which belong to the peace settlement. I have refused. The Armistice conditions are sharpened month by month. They retain our prisoners and maintain the blockade. Germany is no longer a dangerous enemy. Demobilisation is complete. She has recognised the consequences of defeat, and is resolved to fulfil the conditions she has accepted. These conditions involve a complete reversal of the political aims of the Germany of the past. But we refuse to regard our enemies as our judges, and their number does not increase their

competence. I shall therefore not allow myself to be driven from the Wilson points, which include the submission of disputes to arbitration, and the sacrifice of armaments which enable a State to fall on its neighbour. We are ready for these limitations of our sovereignty if our foes are also willing. We recognise that our attitude at the Hague Conferences in these two fundamental questions was a historical wrong for which our whole people have now to pay the price.

"We are ready to make good the damage in the devastated districts—by free labour, not by our prisoners of war. We cannot enter the League of Nations without our mercantile marine or colonies. We would accept international control of tropical colonies if others do the same. Alsace-Lorraine should have a plebiscite—that is the spirit of Wilson, though not the letter. To annex the Saar would be as much an act of Imperialist violence as were the designs of German chauvinists on the Briey basin. If such ideas prevail at the Conference, there is no hope of improving international relations, as the treasures of the soil would pass from hand to hand by the right of the stronger. France has an interest in the weakening of Germany so long as the two nations regard each other as hereditary foes, and confront one another armed to the teeth, each fearing attack. But such a situation the world will not for ever tolerate, and it will be the task of the Conference to create guarantees which render it needless. But let them not seek the guarantee in tearing away parts of a living unity. For ourselves we ask only for German Austria, and that the Conference will surely allow. Till the boundaries of Poland are settled, Germany retains the Polish provinces. The Poles are attacking, and pegging out claims. We cannot expect to have a comfortable neighbour in Poland."

The Foreign Secretary ended on a note of welcome to the new order. "The idea of a League of Nations, which recently was the dream of ideologists, rises now

from the cloudland of Utopia into the clear light of day in which practical statesmen work. Germany, democratic and disarmed, is fitted and resolved to co-operate in the League, though the others will only admit us with deep mistrust. This mistrust we must dispel by proofs of our sincere love of peace. Such a proof will be found first in our determined break with the policy of armaments ; but intellectual disarmament is also needed. We are conquered, but not dishonoured." It was an impressive utterance, and was received with general applause ; for it combined frank criticism of the Imperial regime and robust faith in a new world order with a plain intimation that there were limits beyond which even a defeated nation could not be asked to go. No attention, however, was paid to the speech at Paris, where the victors were confident of their power to enforce whatever terms they cared to impose.

Rumours of decisions reached in Paris began to circulate in March, and a few demonstrations against a " Peace of Force " were held with the approval of the Government. The people, however, were hungry and weary, and the Independents, voicing a widespread though transitory sentiment, argued that frontiers were less important than bread. The loss of Alsace-Lorraine and North Schleswig was a foregone conclusion, and no one dreamed what sacrifices were to be demanded on the Eastern front. In the spring of 1919, as in the summer of 1918, Germany was living in a fool's paradise, unaware of the dark fate in store for her. An ominous indication of the victors' mood was the announcement that oral discussion of the terms would not be allowed ; and when the German Government replied that in that case they would send two secretaries to receive the document, they were bidden to send plenipotentiaries authorised to sign. There was no choice but to obey. The German delegation was headed by the Foreign Minister, who was accompanied by Landsberg, the Minister of Justice, Schücking, the pacifist jurist, and three others. They arrived at Versailles on 29th April,

and on 7th May the formal presentation of the treaty took place at the Trianon Palace Hotel, in which they were lodged. The conflict, declared Clemenceau in briefly opening the ceremony, had cost the victors too much for them not to take all necessary precautions that the peace should be a lasting one.

When the bulky volumes containing the peace terms had been formally delivered, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, without rising from his seat, read a brief but pregnant declaration. " We have no illusions as to the extent of our defeat and the measure of our impotence. We know that the power of German arms is broken, and we are aware of the fury of the hatred which greets us. We are asked to assume the sole guilt of the war. Such a confession from my lips would be a lie. We have no intention of absolving Germany from all responsibility for the war. The attitude of the previous German Government at the Hague Conferences, its decisions and omissions in the tragic twelve days of July 1914, may have contributed to the tragedy ; but we expressly contend that Germany, whose people was convinced that it was fighting a defensive war, should not be saddled with the whole responsibility. None of us will argue that the mischief began with the murder of the Archduke. In the last fifty years Imperialism has poisoned the international position of all European States. The policy of revenge, the policy of expansion, and the flouting of the rights of self-determination have contributed to the crisis. The Russian mobilisation gave the decision to the military authorities.

" Public opinion among our foes dilates on the crimes committed by Germany during the conflict. We are not here to deny the responsibility of the men who directed the war, or the violations of international law. We repeat the declaration that wrong was done to Belgium, and we are ready to make it good. But in the waging of the war Germany is not the only offender. If we are asked to stand in a white sheet, do not let the Armistice be forgotten. It was six months before we

learned your terms. Crimes in times of war may be unpardonable, but they are committed in the heat of the contest. The hundreds of thousands of non-combatants who have died of the blockade since 11th November were killed in cold blood after the victory had been won. Think of that when you speak of crime and punishment. Only an impartial inquiry, a neutral commission before which all the protagonists of the tragedy can appear and for which all the archives are open, can determine the degree of responsibility of all the actors. For this we have already asked, and we repeat our demand.

"In this Conference, where we stand alone, we are not without defence. You yourselves have given us an ally—the rights guaranteed in the contract on the principles of peace. The Allies have renounced a peace of force and inscribed a peace of justice on their banner. The principles of President Wilson are binding on you, as well as on us. They require from us grave national and economic sacrifices, but the sacred rights of all peoples are respected. The conscience of the world is behind them, and no nation will violate them without paying the penalty. I regard as the first task the reconstruction of the devastated districts. We have recognised the obligation and are resolved to fulfil it. Our experts must examine how the German people can discharge its financial obligations without total collapse. The lofty conception of securing from the greatest tragedy of history the greatest advance has been proclaimed and will be accomplished. Only when the doors of the League of Nations are open to all nations of goodwill can the goal be reached. Only then can it be said that the dead have not died in vain. The German people is ready to shoulder its heavy burdens if the agreed principles of peace are observed. A peace which cannot be defended in the name of right would always provoke fresh opposition. No one could honourably sign it, for it would be incapable of fulfilment." The Foreign Minister's declaration and the tone in which it was delivered appeared to certain members of his

audience to breathe a spirit of lowering defiance. But it merely reiterated the principles of his first address to the National Assembly, and if re-read to-day it will appear to most judges skilfully adapted to avoid the pitfalls of truculent self-righteousness and insincere contrition.

The Peace imposed far-reaching territorial, military, and economic sacrifices. On the West Germany was to cede Alsace-Lorraine to France, and Prussian Moresnet, Eupen, and Malmédy to Belgium. In the two latter cases the population was to be consulted after the transfer. The Saar coal-mines were to be surrendered to France, and the Saar territory to be administered by the League of Nations for fifteen years, at the end of which a plebiscite was to determine its fate. If the decision favoured Germany, France was to receive the value of the coal-mines at that date. Luxemburg was to withdraw from the Zollverein, and the left bank of the Rhine to be demilitarised. On the Danish frontier Northern Schleswig was to determine its future by a plebiscite. More formidable sacrifices were demanded in the East, where the larger part of Posen, West Prussia, and Upper Silesia were to pass to the Poles. The Danzig district was to be severed from the Reich, and to be a Free City under the League of Nations, but within the Polish Customs Union. East Prussia was separated from the rest of Germany by a wide Polish "corridor," stretching northwards along the Vistula to the sea; and plebiscites were to be held in the south and west of the province. Memel and its environs were to be ceded to the Allies, who would determine its ultimate fortunes. The territorial losses of Germany in Europe would thus amount to about one-tenth of her population and about one-eighth of her area.

The sacrifices demanded outside Europe were even more wholesale, for the Treaty made a clean sweep of the colonial empire, which was to be divided among the victors in the capacity of mandatories. South-West Africa was to become part of the Union of South Africa.

East Africa fell to Great Britain, who earmarked to Belgium a small but thickly populated strip in the north-west, which adjoined the frontier of the Congo State. France was to obtain almost the whole of Togoland and the Cameroons, the remainder falling to Great Britain. The territories in the Pacific were to be divided between Japan and the British Empire, the former receiving Kiao-Chau and the islands north of the equator, the latter obtaining German New Guinea and the islands south of the line. German Samoa was allotted to New Zealand, Nauru to Great Britain, and the rest of the spoils to Australia.

The disarming of Germany had been rapidly proceeding under the terms of the Armistice; but the Treaty provided for further and permanent limitations. Conscription was to be abolished, and by April 1920 the army was to be reduced to 100,000 men, enlisted for twelve years. The General Staff was to disappear. Large guns were forbidden, and the number of small guns and munitions was narrowly circumscribed. A belt of fifty kilometres on the east bank of the Rhine was to be demilitarised. No less drastic was the handling of the navy, which was to be limited to six battleships, six light cruisers, twelve destroyers, and twelve torpedo-boats, with a volunteer personnel of 15,000. No submarines were to be built, no fortifications were to be erected on the Baltic, and the fortress of Heligoland was to be dismantled at German expense. No military aeroplanes or dirigibles were to be retained or constructed.

In the economic field the heaviest losses were the iron-mines of Lorraine and the coal of Upper Silesia and the Saar. In addition, a large quantity of coal was to be delivered to France for ten years, in compensation for the French mines which were out of action. Germany was to surrender all her merchantmen over 1600 tons, half those between 1600 and 800 tons, and a quarter of her fishing vessels, and to build tonnage of 200,000 a year for the Allies for five years. She was also to bear

the cost of the armies of occupation, and to consent to the sale of all German property in Allied countries. The total sum for reparations was to be fixed by an International Commission before 1st May 1921; but by that date one thousand millions were to be paid, the remainder being liquidated in thirty years. No tariff discrimination against Allied trade was to be allowed for five years; the Kiel Canal was to be open on equal terms to warships and merchantmen of all nations; the great German rivers were to be placed under International Commissions. The sanction for the Treaty was to consist in the occupation for fifteen years (to be extended if the Allies were not assured of security against attack) of the left bank and bridgeheads of the Rhine, which would be evacuated in three stages as the indemnity was discharged. If Germany failed to discharge her obligations, either during or after the fifteen years, the evacuated area might be reoccupied. Finally, Germany and her Allies were to recognise their sole responsibility for the conflict, while the Kaiser was to be tried by judges of the five Great Powers and offenders against the laws and customs of war by special military tribunals.

The first instinct of the Delegation after a rapid glance at the Treaty on 7th May was to reject it out of hand, on the double ground that it violated the Fourteen Points and that it was technically impracticable. Wiser counsels prevailed, and the Delegates, aided by their experts, availed themselves of the permission to forward observations in writing. For this purpose two weeks were allowed; but though the Delegation worked at high pressure the time proved too short, and an extra week was allowed. After a few preliminary memoranda on special points had been forwarded to the Allies, it was determined to present the formal reply as a whole; and the German counter-proposals, a bulky volume of 443 pages, was accordingly transmitted to the Allies on 29th May.

A covering letter from the Foreign Minister expressed

the anger aroused by the nature of the terms, and summarised the sacrifices which the German Government was ready to undertake. "We came to Versailles expecting to receive a Treaty based on agreed foundations. We were indignant when we read the demands of the victors. The more deeply we penetrated the spirit of this document, the more convinced we became of its impracticability. Its demands are beyond the power of the German people. A whole people is thus to sign its own death-warrant. Germany accepts the reduction of the army to 100,000 and the surrender of the fleet, but assumes that she is at once admitted to the League of Nations as an equal. She surrenders her sovereignty in Alsace-Lorraine, but desires a plebiscite. She surrenders the larger portion of the province of Posen and is ready to secure free and safe access to the sea for Poland by free ports in Danzig, Königsberg, and Memel, by an arrangement for the navigation of the Vistula, and by special railway pacts under international guarantee. She accepts the transfer of the predominantly Danish portions of Schleswig to Denmark on the basis of a plebiscite. She asks that the right of self-determination should be respected in the case of the Germans of Austria and Bohemia. She is ready to place all her colonies under the League of Nations if she is recognised as its mandatory. She is prepared to pay a hundred milliards —twenty before 1st May 1926, the rest in annual instalments without interest, but not over one milliard in the first ten years. Her people shall be taxed not less than the most heavily burdened of the Allies. She assumes that only the above-mentioned territories will be cut off, and that she will regain her economic liberty at home and abroad. She is ready to supply twenty million tons of coal for the first five years to make good the mines of Belgium and Northern France, and eight millions for the second five years. She is ready to transfer her whole mercantile marine to a world-pool, to give part of her tonnage to her foes as

compensation, and to build ships in German yards. The German Delegation renews its request for a neutral inquiry into the responsibility for the war." The letter concludes by arguing that only oral negotiations can be fruitful. "This peace will be the greatest contract ever known. There is no precedent for such widely-ranging negotiations being carried on entirely by the exchange of Notes. The sentiment of the peoples, who have borne such immense sacrifices, demands that their fate be decided in unfettered discussion, in accordance with the principle, Open Covenants openly arrived at."

The German counter-proposals bristle with quotations from President Wilson and other spokesmen of the Allies, and fiercely accuse the victors of breach of promise, both express and implied. "It is impossible to imagine what more onerous conditions could have been imposed on an Imperialist Government. In the document before us a moribund conception of the world, imperialistic and capitalistic in tendency, celebrates its last horrible triumph." The reply proceeds to discuss the Treaty section by section, accepting, rejecting, and modifying in turn. Germany was ready to enter the League of Nations on a footing of equality, and desired a general limitation of armaments within two years. The cession of territory in the East is hotly denounced. Memel, it declares, is not inhabited by Lithuanians. Poland is assumed to be a half-civilised country, to which the transfer of Germans is a humiliation. "The rape of Danzig" figures prominently in the indictment, and it is pointed out that East Prussia, in portions of which a plebiscite is to be held, has been part of Germany for three centuries, and that none of its inhabitants desire to be separated from it "except foreign agitators." Though unable to contest Polish claims in West Prussia, the reply repudiates the proposed line, and pleads the "economic, cultural, and social significance" of German activities in that Province. The "corridor"

connecting Poland with the sea, and severing East Prussia from the rest of Germany, is sharply attacked. Worst of all would be the loss of Upper Silesia, which would not only deprive Germany of a district developed by German brains and capital, but would involve its own industrial decay, since in Poland social legislation is almost unknown. "Only with Upper Silesia can Germany fulfil the obligations arising from the war; and for this reason, if for no other, she could not cede it." Scarcely less insistent is the protest against the loss of the colonies, which, it is argued, had been acquired in a justifiable manner and efficiently developed. Germany claimed to possess colonies both as one of the great civilised races and in the interest of the natives themselves. She therefore demanded a mandate for all her oversea possessions, except Kiao-chau, where she asked compensation for public property. In regard to reparations she offered to pay twenty milliards before 1st May 1926, and a grand total of a hundred milliards, subject to her retention of Upper Silesia, the colonies, and her larger merchantmen. A mercantile fleet was essential to recovery, and Germany was ready to build ships for the Allies to replace those that were destroyed. The reply ended on a note of combined warning and appeal. Bolshevism was the child of despair, and the Treaty would spell despair for Germany. Justice and the free consent of all parties would furnish the strongest, indeed the only, guarantees of the compact.

The long argumentative reply, which merely stiffened the back of Clemenceau and left President Wilson cold, produced a profound effect on the impressionable British Premier, who summoned his Cabinet colleagues from London, and found them no less inclined to compromise than himself. "They were atrocious days," writes Tardieu, the chief architect of the Treaty. "He was scared by the consequences of a refusal to sign or a crisis in Germany. On every question,—disarmament, occupation, reparations,

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Danzig, Upper Silesia—he proposed inadmissible concessions. The work of two months threatened to collapse." Clemenceau gravely rejoined that France knew the Germans best ; that concessions would only encourage their resistance ; and that British opinion did not appear to object to making Germany surrender her colonies and her fleet. Receiving no support from President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George had to content himself with securing a few concessions, only one of which was of more than minor significance.

The Allied reply, a document of sixty pages, was presented on 16th June, and showed little disposition to accept either the arguments or the claims of the German counter-proposals.[1] The makers of the peace, it began, had been guided by the Wilson principles. Proceeding to Poland, the heart of the controversy, it explained that the Allies desired to right the wrong which had too long poisoned the political life of a large portion of Europe. If they had pressed the claim of historic rights, they would have adjudged almost the whole of Posen and West Prussia to Poland. To avoid injustice they had left Germany the parts with a German majority, except where systematic expropriation and artificial colonisation had altered the ethnographic map. They would, however, in some measure meet the German complaint by moving the new frontier a little further to the East. In Upper Silesia, on the other hand, an important concession, due exclusively to the insistence of Mr. Lloyd George, was announced : the inhabitants were to vote on their own destiny. If the district were as a result to pass under Polish rule, coal was to be available to Germany for fifteen years on the same terms as to the Poles, and the interests of Germans in the event of the liquidation of their property were to be protected. An article was to be added by which Poland would sign a Treaty on the same day as the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, undertaking to protect the

[1] Published in *The Treaty of Peace*, Stationery Office, 1920.

German minority. Though the Polish corridor to the Baltic was to be upheld, communications with East Prussia were to be facilitated. In the West the line laid down for the plebiscite was to be slightly altered at the desire of Denmark. Passing from the territorial clauses the reply announced a few alleviations in other fields. The period for the reduction of the military forces and the demolition of fortresses was prolonged. German representation on the River Commissions was to be increased. While rejecting the proposed plan of reparations on the ground that interest was not to be charged and that no substantial payment was proposed before 1927, the Allies allowed Germany, within four months of the signature of the Treaty, to offer a lump sum in settlement of her liabilities.

The passionate sternness of the language of the covering letter which accompanied the Allied reply showed that these concessions were the result of political considerations, not of any softening of heart. Germany, as responsible for the war and for "the savage and inhuman manner in which it was conducted," had committed "the greatest crime against humanity and the freedom of peoples that any nation calling itself civilised had ever consciously committed." Seven millions in Europe were dead, and over twenty millions were wounded, "because Germany saw fit to gratify her lust for tyranny by resort to war." The letter concluded with the notification that the Allies had spoken their last word, and that the German Delegation must declare within five days if they were prepared to sign the Treaty with the changes herewith announced. A refusal would terminate the Armistice, and the Allies would then take the necessary steps to enforce their terms.

On 10th June, Brockdorff-Rantzau had informed an interviewer that Germany would never sign the Treaty in its original form, and the Allies' reply of 16th June failed to disarm his hostility. In a brief

rejoinder on the following day he declared that the concessions related to secondary points, with the important exception of the plebiscite in Upper Silesia ; and even here the conditions attached to the decision betrayed a desire to transfer the district to the Poles. For instance, if the territory opted for Poland, it was to escape the burdens of the war. The facilitation of railway communication with East Prussia, and the slight modification of the frontier in West Prussia and Posen, were but welcome trifles. The Treaty was in essence unchanged, and the assurance that Germany should enter the League when she had begun to carry it out was worthless, since its provisions were technically impracticable. "The German Delegation learns from the answer of the Allies," concluded the letter of the Foreign Minister in bitter tones, "that they are not willing to keep the engagement, which was accepted by them as binding, involved in the acceptance of the Fourteen Points, and that all the solemn assurances to the German people and to the world are to remain unfulfilled. In almost all important questions the agreed basis is ignored. Moreover, the Allied Governments—obviously in the consciousness of wrong-doing—declined the proposal of oral discussion. The terms remain intolerable, because Germany in accepting them would forfeit her independence and her honour ; impracticable, because even a prosperous Germany could not fulfil the financial and economic demands ; illegal, because they violate the solemn official assurances to the German people ; and dishonest, because, contrary to the truth, Germany is asked to confess her sole responsibility for the war. The German Delegation is therefore firmly convinced that the German Government must reject the Treaty in its present form."

The scene now changes from Versailles to Weimar. While the Foreign Minister and his colleagues had been battling for concessions at the front, the German Government was attempting to decide whether to

accept or reject a ruinous peace. The publication of the terms handed to the Delegation on 7th May struck the nation with the force of a physical blow, and it was not till this moment that the German people fully realised the measure of their defeat. Bethmann-Hollweg spoke for his countrymen in declaring that the world had never seen a more frightful instrument for the enslavement of the vanquished. There was no difference of opinion in the Cabinet as to the humiliating and indeed intolerable conditions which it was ordered to accept; but the dread consequences of rejection required to be very carefully weighed. From the first moment Chancellor Scheidemann, like the Foreign Minister, determined to reject the Treaty in its original form. In the first draft of his declaration to the Assembly he inserted a fiery passage which reveals the tumult of emotions provoked even in his prosaic mind: "I shall not discuss the dangers of Yes or No. There will be time for that if the impossible threatens to occur—if the earth can bear such a document without the cry arising from millions of throats in every country and every party, 'Away with this murder plan!'"

The Cabinet of 12th May extinguished this flaming brand, and battle was joined on an adjective. It was agreed on all hands that he should declare the terms "intolerable and impracticable"; and a minority, consisting of Erzberger and two Socialists, argued that that was enough. The Democrats, on the other hand, tightly bound by a resolution of their party, threatened to resign unless the word "unacceptable" were pronounced. The word was accordingly embodied in Scheidemann's declaration to the Reichstag, by whom it was loudly applauded. "Who can, as an honourable man, accept these conditions?" he cried. "Where is the hand that would not wither if it binds us in these fetters?" Erzberger, the leader of the party of compromise, advised his followers not to stampede the country into a position whence retreat was impossible;

for though he had no expectation of substantial modifications, he hoped that enough might be granted to turn the scale in favour of acceptance. The ultimate decision had, in any case, to await the result of the negotiations. To the intense annoyance of the Ministry, the Independent Socialists organised demonstrations in favour of immediate acceptance. To counteract this weakening of the national front, the Majority Socialists replied by a demonstration against a "peace of violence," at which the Chancellor explained his position. "No member of the Government would be so dishonourable as to promise what he knows he cannot perform. We wish for peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points. We are ready for negotiations. We are doing our utmost to bring about negotiations, which must not depart from what can really bring peace to the world."

After officially declaring the Treaty "unacceptable" in its original form, the Government, represented by the Chancellor, Erzberger, and Dernburg, held a meeting with the German Delegation at Spa, where it was decided to present counter-proposals in a single comprehensive document, which, as we have seen, was handed to the Allies on 29th May. On 1st June Erzberger urged that the Cabinet should attempt to reach a provisional decision in advance, since an ultimatum might at any moment arrive from Paris and leave little time for reflection.[1] The Chancellor therefore invited Erzberger to summarise the arguments in a memorandum, which was discussed in special meetings of the Cabinet on 3rd and 4th June. Without speculating on the extent of the Allies' concessions, the Catholic leader grapples with the fundamental issues of the problem. If the Treaty were signed, he argues, the state of war would end, the blockade would be raised, food and raw material would enter the country, exports would begin, prisoners would return, the unity of the Reich would be

[1] The final scenes are vividly depicted by Erzberger, Scheidemann, and Payer,—all three leading actors in the drama.

assured, work would be resumed, the exchange would improve, Bolshevism would lose its appeal, and any reactionary Putsch from the eastern provinces would be frustrated by the universal longing for peace. If, on the other hand, the Treaty were not signed, the state of war would immediately recommence, the Allies would occupy the Ruhr and perhaps sever North and South by a corridor from Frankfurt to Prague, the blockade would be intensified, men of military age would be imprisoned, the occupied districts would be exposed to reprisals and requisitions, the Poles would invade the country, the inhabitants from East and West would flock to the interior and raise the cost of living, the machinery of state would stop working, money would lose its value, a civil war would break out in Berlin and the great cities, the separate States would make separate peace, a Rhineland Republic would emerge, France's dream of a mosaic of small States would be realised, and after a short advance of the troops a still worse settlement would be imposed, which would be made not by the Reich but by the separate States, coupled with the obligation not to reunite. Finally, the Coalition Government would be replaced by Independents and Communists.

The terrifying arguments of the memorandum were developed by its author with his usual vigour, and won the support of Noske and David. "Our people is so sadly out at elbows (*verlumpt*) that we *must* sign," observed Noske. All the other Ministers, however, opposed acceptance, and the three Democrats, Preuss, Dernburg, and Gothein, once again declared that surrender would involve their resignation. Giesberts, a member of the Centre, was equally hostile. The Chancellor announced that he could not go back on his public declarations, and argued that the terrors foretold by Erzberger from rejection would not be avoided by acceptance. "We should say to the Entente, What you demand we cannot fulfil. If you do not believe us, come and try your hand in Berlin. Do not

expect us to be our own executioner. The Treaty is for me a bit of paper on which I will not write my name." It was in vain that Erzberger reiterated his conviction that the unity of the Reich was the supreme consideration, and that rejection would involve separate settlements. A majority of the Ministers sided with the Chancellor, and the President shared the prevailing opinion. Since agreement was impossible, it was decided to consult the rank and file of the three parties represented in the Government.

At this point the Allied ultimatum of 16th June, for such it was, demanded immediate action, and the German Delegation was summoned home to assist in the supreme decision. The plebiscite in Upper Silesia, the sole material concession of the Allies, was insufficient to shake Scheidemann's resolve, be the cost what it would. The question, however, had to be decided in the last resort not by the Cabinet but by the National Assembly, and to the Chancellor's surprise the majority of his Socialist followers favoured acceptance. Party meetings sat day and night, for the Government parties, like the Cabinet, were divided within themselves. During the night of 18th–19th June the Ministers held a decisive meeting, and discovered that the two sides were of equal strength. The three Catholics and four Socialists urged acceptance, which was opposed by the three Democrats, the Foreign Minister, the Chancellor, and two other Socialists. The Ministers of the States were now consulted, and on learning that a majority of them supported acceptance, Scheidemann resigned. A new Cabinet was formed by Bauer, the Socialist Minister of Labour, with Erzberger as Minister of Finance. Since the Democrats refused to participate in a Cabinet of surrender, the new Chancellor had to content himself with six Socialist and four Catholic colleagues. Though the Socialists held most of the portfolios, it was an Erzberger Cabinet in everything but name.

On 22nd June the new Government informed the

Assembly of its willingness to sign the Treaty subject to the omission of the clauses recognising the sole responsibility of the Central Powers for the war (which had been repudiated in a substantial White Book compiled by four well-known German scholars and presented to the Allies on 28th May) and demanding the surrender of German subjects for trial by enemy Courts. A division then took place on the motion that "the Assembly agrees to the signature of the Peace," which was carried by 237 to 138. The majority consisted of the Centre, almost all the Majority Socialists, all the Independents, and a few of the Democrats. The minority was composed of the two parties of the Right, the main force of the Democrats, and a handful of Majority Socialists. There was no difference in patriotism between the two sides. The majority was convinced by Erzberger's argument that the unity of the Reich was at stake, that a treaty would have to be signed some day, and that the last state would be worse than the first. For a German Government had itself shown at Brest-Litovsk how a defenceless people could be punished for recalcitrance. The minority consisted of two sections, the Right preferring that the Reich should "perish with honour" rather than drink the cup of humiliation, the Left cherishing a hope that passive resistance might stir the friends of peace in Allied countries to demand a milder settlement.

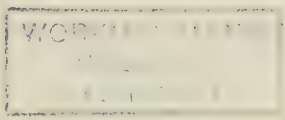
A majority had been obtained for conditional acceptance, but at the eleventh hour the two conditions were refused. It was indeed scarcely to be expected that the victorious Allies, after announcing on 16th June that they had spoken their last word, would yield on the cardinal issue of war guilt, or defy the popular clamour for the surrender of the Kaiser and his accomplices; and any remote possibility of compromise was destroyed by the sensational news of the deliberate sinking of the German Fleet at Scapa Flow. To the request for these concessions the Allies curtly rejoined that the time for

negotiations was over, and that the decision of the German Government must be notified before 7 p.m. on 23rd June.

It was an agonising moment, and the situation was complicated by a communication from General Maercker, who was charged with the safety of the National Assembly, that if the Treaty were to be signed the officers of the Reichswehr would resign and could not answer for the preservation of order. The warning was received with consternation, for anarchy now appeared to be inevitable, whether the Treaty were signed or not. The party leaders were summoned by the President, and their task was facilitated by an opportune telegram from General Gröner, who had succeeded Ludendorff as Quartermaster-General in the last days of the war. Speaking " not as an officer but as a German," the General declared his belief that it was the duty of the Government to sign. It was thus clear that the officers were divided, and that a firm attitude might after all prevent anarchy. Erzberger accordingly asked the Opposition leaders if they were prepared to assume the burden of office, reject the Treaty, and continue the war. There was no response. Nor was there any demand from the Opposition for a fresh vote of the Assembly. The resolution conditionally authorising the Government to sign the Treaty was therefore tacitly allowed to cover the new situation.

The final discussions of the riddle " to be or not to be " had been held by distracted Ministers with their eyes on the clock, and the telegram of unconditional acceptance reached Versailles less than two hours before the expiry of the ultimatum. The closing scene of the mighty drama took place five days later on 28th June, when the Treaty of Versailles was signed by Germany and by all the Allies except China in the Galerie des Glaces, in which the German Empire had been proudly proclaimed half a century before. The wheel had come full circle. It was the hour of Clemenceau, the signal

of triumph and deliverance. But a treaty may end war without inaugurating peace. The work of that summer afternoon was but a prelude to fresh struggles, and the execution of its provisions was to arouse in German hearts a passionate hatred of France unknown in the days and years of fiercest conflict.



CHAPTER XI

THE EXECUTION OF THE TREATY

The signature of the Treaty of Versailles and the acceptance of the Constitution terminated the transitional era which began with the Revolution and the Armistice. The Assembly migrated from Weimar to Berlin, and the Democrats re-entered the Ministry. The parties of the Right clamoured for a general election, on the ground that the Constituent Assembly had completed the task to which it was called ; but the Government, possessing as it did an overwhelming majority in a Reichstag only a few months old, dismissed the demand as premature. Its first task was to overhaul the finances, and his worst enemy could not accuse Erzberger of fearing to tax the rich. His programme included a capital levy, described as an emergency contribution (*Reichsnotopfer*), and heavy increases both of income tax and indirect taxation. The courageous effort produced disappointing results, partly owing to the fall of the mark, partly to the dodging of taxation ; and Erzberger was shortly after compelled to resign his post by the revelations of his arch-foe Helfferich. The young Republic, none too rich in political talent, suffered further heavy losses in the murder of Haase, the leader of the Independents, and the death of Naumann, the orator of the Democrats.

The Treaty of Versailles came into force on 10th January 1920.[1] The time limits began to run, and its execution was henceforth the main problem of German politics. Prisoners of war returned home. Alsace-Lorraine and the other ceded territories were transferred. Commissions sprang up like mushrooms—for the delimitation of frontiers, for the holding of plebiscites, for the navigation of rivers, for the provisional government of Danzig and Memel, for repatriating prisoners, for the supervision of disarmament, for reparations, for the control of the occupied territories. Most of

[1] See Temperley, *History of the Peace Conference*; B. W. von Bülow, *Der Versailler Völkerbund*.

these bodies reported to the Conference of Allied Ambassadors at Paris, which had been created as a clearing-house to interpret and execute the treaties. The appearance of a horde of foreign officials on German soil produced opposite reactions, the Right advocating passive, or in some cases active, resistance; the Left seeking ultimate emancipation from unwelcome tutelage by the policy of fulfilment. All parties, on the other hand, were equally incensed at the wholesale expulsions from Alsace and Lorraine, including professors who had long been the ornaments of the University of Strassburg.

The first task of the Allies was to constitute the frontiers of the new Germany by holding plebiscites in the scheduled districts. The earliest occurred in North Schleswig, where Bismarck had promised to consult the inhabitants after the war of 1864. The consultation never took place, and the promise was ultimately withdrawn; but its Danish character and sympathies were never in doubt. By a wise provision the northern or mixed half of the province was divided into two zones, the first of which declared for Denmark in February, the second opting for Germany in March. In each case the majority was decisive enough to silence objections, and the votes were cast without official or unofficial pressure from either side. No sacrifice arising out of the war was borne with such equanimity; for North Schleswig was neither strategically significant nor economically indispensable, and it would have been impossible to demand the retention of a district inhabited by Danes at a moment when Germany was protesting against the cession of territories largely, though not predominantly, peopled by Germans.

Very different was the method by which Eupen and Malmédy passed out of German hands, and very different was the spirit in which the sacrifice was regarded. While North Schleswig had been connected with Denmark for centuries, the Kreise or Circles had

never belonged to or even been coveted by Belgium. The reasons were strategic and political. The blow might have been easier to bear had they been transferred, like the duodecimo units of neutral and Prussian Moresnet, without more ado. The Treaty, however, provided that during the six months following ratification, registers should be opened at Eupen and Malmédy, in which the inhabitants could "record their desire to see the whole or part remain under German sovereignty." The result was to be communicated by the Belgian Government to the League of Nations, whose decision Belgium undertook to accept. There was no indication as to who should vote, and no guarantee for the free expression of opinion. The principle of consulting the population after, instead of before, the change of sovereignty was preposterous, and it was only adopted in the present case. It was believed in Germany that this course was chosen in order to avoid a *bona fide* plebiscite, which would have resulted in an overwhelming majority for the *status quo*, since the Circle of Eupen was purely, and the Circle of Malmédy predominantly, German.

The manner in which the consultation of the inhabitants took place was as vicious as the principle on which it was based. "Protest lists," as they were called, were prepared, but every obstacle was placed in the path of those who desired to use them. Signatures could only be recorded in the two chief towns, which involved a considerable journey for many of the villagers. Moreover, on some occasions the lists were locked up and the official in charge was absent. In certain cases would-be signatories were advised to abstain or threatened with unpleasant consequences. These illegalities were brought by the German Government to the notice of the Allies, who replied that they reposed complete confidence in the Belgian authorities. An appeal to the League of Nations for a Commission of Inquiry evoked the reply that it could not intervene till the report was received from

Belgium after the statutory six months had elapsed. A local deputation to the League was forbidden to start, and the petition which it forwarded to the Secretary of the League received no reply. The grievances of the inhabitants were nevertheless revealed to the world by British, Dutch, Swiss, and Scandinavian journalists; and certain Belgian newspapers plucked up courage to criticise.

In July 1920 the six months were up and the registers were closed. Of 63,000 inhabitants only 271 had inscribed their names. The result was reported by Belgium to the League, which shortly after received a White Book from the German Government detailing the methods by which the population had been consulted, and asking for an unfettered plebiscite under the auspices of the League. The German complaints were referred for examination to the Brazilian Minister in Paris, and on his assurance that there was no strong opposition Belgium was confirmed in possession of the Circles. It was in vain that the German Government presented additional proofs of intimidation and renewed its request for a free vote. The Council rejoined that its decision was irrevocable. The size of the territory was insignificant, and the population was small; but the revelation of the mood of the conquerors enhanced the bitterness of the territorial sacrifice, and the indifference of the League laid the foundations of the brooding hostility with which it soon came to be regarded by the overwhelming majority of the German people.

No such difficulties were experienced in carrying out the two plebiscites in Eastern Prussia in July 1920; for the Treaty determined that every man and woman over twenty should vote under the supervision of an Inter-Allied Commission. In the larger of the two, the Allenstein area, a land of lakes and bogs where Tannenberg was fought, slightly more than half the population of 500,000 was Polish, or, as the Germans described them, Masurians. Since, however, they

had lived for centuries under Prussian rule, were Protestants in religion, and spoke a local dialect, the magnetic force of Poland was weak. The plebiscite resulted in a decisive victory for Germany, 363,000 voting for the maintenance of the *status quo*, and only 8000 for union with Warsaw. The second plebiscite, in the Marienwerder district on the east of the Vistula, resulted in a similar incontestable victory for the *status quo*. The plebiscite in Upper Silesia, where larger numbers and graver issues were involved, was postponed to the following year.

While the boundaries of the new Germany were being determined by popular vote, one of the most controversial provisions on the Treaty demanded fulfilment. The punishment, and, indeed, the execution of the ex-Kaiser had figured prominently in the hectic British election of November 1918, and Article 227 publicly arraigned him "for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties." A tribunal of five judges, drawn from the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, was to try him, and determine the nature of his punishment. For this purpose the Allies would request the Dutch Government to surrender the fugitive. The article had been inserted at the wish of the British Government despite the disapproval of the United States and Japan and the indifference of France; but on 28th June, the day of the signature of the Treaty, the French Chargé d'Affaires at the Hague presented a note in the name of the Allies expressing anxiety lest the Kaiser should escape, and offering to relieve Holland of the responsibility for his person. The Dutch Government replied that it must reserve the free exercise of its sovereignty, and nothing more was heard of the matter till January 1920, when the Allies demanded his surrender for trial and forwarded a catalogue of crimes with which he was charged. The Dutch Government rejoined that Holland was not bound by a Treaty to which she was not a party, and

that the traditions and honour of the country forbade the surrender of a refugee. The Allies reiterated their demand, and raised the question of his safe custody. The Dutch Government stoutly refused to yield, and assured the Allies that "in the free exercise of its sovereignty it would continue to take all necessary precautions and to impose the necessary limitations on the Emperor." Their communication was followed by Royal decrees assigning a residence to the Kaiser in the province of Utrecht and to the Crown Prince in the island of Wieringen. The Allies thereupon announced that the Dutch Government could not escape exclusive responsibility for their actions, and with this blank cartridge the diplomatic duel came to an end. The monarch's flight to Holland had destroyed any lingering popularity that he still enjoyed; but if anything could arouse sympathy with the fallen ruler it was the demand that he should be tried by a tribunal exclusively composed of enemy judges. The decision to refuse extradition, which had been generally anticipated, was received in most quarters with a sigh of relief.

The ex-Kaiser was only the chief of the offenders against the laws and customs of war whose extradition and trial before Allied tribunals was demanded in the Treaty of Versailles. No action, however, could be taken till the Treaty came into operation; and in the interval some of the criminals escaped, while over-sea witnesses returned to their distant homes. In a note of 5th November 1919 the German Government notified the Allies that serious consequences might ensue if the clauses were carried out. Undeterred by this warning, M. Millerand, the French Premier, presented a portentous list of "War Criminals" on 3rd February 1920 to Baron von Lersner, the head of the German Peace Commission in Paris, who returned it with the intimation that he must decline to forward it to his Government. It was therefore dispatched to the French Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin, by whom

it was handed to the German Government. The publication of the document aroused passionate indignation throughout Germany, for Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Tirpitz, Bethmann-Hollweg, several ex-princes, and nine hundred officers and soldiers of different ranks figured in the list. There was no exaggeration in the statement of the Government that an attempt to arrest national heroes would involve its downfall. The situation was considered by the Allies at a Conference in London on 13th February, which wisely decided to accept the offer of trials at Leipzig under the supervision of the Allies, who explicitly reserved the right to enforce the provisions of the Treaty in case of need. An Inter-Allied Commission, set up to make the necessary preparations, ultimately agreed to select test cases, for which they would supply the evidence, while leaving full responsibility to the German Government for seeing that justice was done.

A considerable time was required for the collection of evidence, and it was not until May 1921 that the trials began.[1] The British cases were ready first and were first heard. A British Mission was present in Court to watch proceedings; but its members were never tempted to intervene, for Dr. Schmidt, the presiding judge, discharged his distasteful duty with courage and impartiality. Of the cases brought forward by Great Britain, three were against commanders of submarines, and three against superintendents of prison camps. In five out of the six the prosecution was successful; and though the punishments, judged by British standards, were deplorably light, it was better that lenient sentences should be imposed by German judges than severe sentences by an enemy tribunal. The evidence of the British witnesses, who made an excellent impression, was accepted, and the President of the Court made the culprits feel that they had disgraced their country. The healthy principle was thus established that individuals, even subordinates,

[1] See C. Mullins, *The Leipzig Trials*, 1921.

could be punished for their misdeeds in time of war. The only prosecution initiated by Belgium failed, and of the five French cases only one was successful. Though the Allies were naturally dissatisfied with the experiment, no further action was taken in a matter which had been badly bungled from the start.

The crushing severity of the Treaty of Versailles, and the humiliating circumstances under which it was signed, weakened the prestige of the Government and encouraged the militant Right to unfurl its banner. It should have been clear that the opening months of 1920, when the Treaty came into force, would prove a critical time for a democratic Republic ; but Noske had been so busy combating the Revolution that he overlooked the growing danger of counter-revolution. The Treaty provided that the army should be reduced to 100,000 men within three months of ratification ; but at the request of the German Government the Supreme Council agreed on 18th February to permit 200,000 till 10th April, and to allow an extra three months for the reduction to the authorised maximum. This trifling concession failed to diminish the bitterness with which a large number of officers looked forward to the termination of their professional careers, and the ferment was increased by the ill-advised demand for the surrender of the Generals. Though it was, above all, in the army that the "policy of fulfilment" was condemned, the unsatisfied Nationalist demand for a general election grew ever more insistent. In such a rank soil it was not difficult for the enemies of the Republic to sow tares.

On the night of 12th–13th March 1920 the Ehrhardt Marine Brigade and the Löwenfeld Brigade at Döberitz declined to be disbanded, and marched on Berlin. The wires were pulled by Dr. Kapp, the mortal enemy of Bethmann-Hollweg during the war, and one of the moving spirits of the Vaterlandspartei, and by General Lüttwitz, whom the unsuspecting Noske had employed to suppress revolutionists of the Left. A

Government "of order, liberty, and action" was announced, with Kapp as Chancellor, Lüttwitz as Minister of Defence, and Jagow, an ex-Prefect of the Berlin Police, as Minister of the Interior. The Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag were declared to be dissolved, and Prussian Ministers were arrested in session, but soon released. The Government and the President fled to Dresden and thence to Stuttgart, whence they hurled defiance at the usurpers. The Putsch was quickly wrecked by a general strike, instigated by the lawful Government, which cut off the capital from the rest of the country, and by the abstention of the Nationalists, either from conscientious disapproval of the enterprise, or in the conviction that the attack was premature. The only member of the Reichstag who assisted the Putsch was Traub, a chauvinist pastor, who became Minister of Education. Though Colonel Bauer, Ludendorff's right-hand man, was an active supporter, and Ludendorff himself was seen in the Chancellor's palace, the Reichswehr Generals as a whole stood aloof, and the Under-Secretary of Finance bravely declined to advance money on the ground that he knew nothing of Chancellor Kapp. In less than a week the game was up. Schiffer, the Vice-Chancellor, who had remained in Berlin, had been arrested and released, and now, after negotiations with the usurpers, took the lead. The ringleaders fled to Sweden or Bavaria. Little blood had been shed—the working-classes preferring to frustrate treason by passive resistance—but a few collisions occurred, and the Baltic Corps fired on the people as it swung out of the Brandenburger Thor.

Though the fanatical Kapp supplied his countrymen with an opportunity of demonstrating their loyalty to the Republic, the short-lived Putsch produced sinister reactions over the whole field of politics. The Hoffmann Government in Bavaria was overthrown, and a Ministry of the extreme Right came into office. The apparent triumph of reaction at Berlin inflamed

the Communists of the Ruhr; and when troops were dispatched to suppress the revolt, the French occupied Frankfurt, Darmstadt, and other towns, on the ground that Germany had sent more than the authorised number of soldiers into a neutralised zone. A week or two later the Supreme Council met at San Remo, where the French decided to evacuate the newly occupied area as soon as the German troops in the Ruhr were reduced to the number allowed by a special agreement of August 1919. They withdrew in May, after a collision with the black troops had occurred in Frankfurt. The reverberations of the Putsch were also felt in the factories of Prussian Saxony, where the communist free-lance Max Hölz formed a marauding band and terrorised the countryside.

Though the Ministry had weathered the storm, its prestige was shattered by its failure to take precautions against an obvious danger. A new Cabinet was formed by the Socialist Foreign Minister, Hermann Müller, and the discredited Noske was replaced by the Bavarian Democrat Gessler as Minister of Defence. The ablest recruit was the new Finance Minister, Dr. Wirth, the rising hope of the Left wing of the Centrum. In Prussia the Socialist Braun formed a Ministry, in which Severing entered on his memorable term of office as Minister of the Interior, resolved that the Republic should not be sabotaged by a monarchical bureaucracy. After this shuffling of the cards the National Assembly was dissolved, and in June the country pronounced its verdict on the work of eighteen eventful months. The Socialists remained by far the largest of the parties, but their poll fell by nearly three millions, the two parties of the Right increasing their supporters by a similar figure. The Independents trebled their strength, and twenty-five Communists entered the Chamber. The unchanging Centre retained its voters and its seats, but the Democrats were smitten hip and thigh. Thus the moderate Left, which had ruled Germany since the Revolution,

lost both to the Right, which opposed socialisation and the policy of fulfilment, and to the extreme Left, which demanded a firmer treatment of the civil and military enemies of the Republic. The new orientation was reflected in the substitution of a Catholic for the Socialist Chancellor, and of the National Liberals for the Socialists in the inevitable Coalition. Though the Fehrenbach Government only represented one-third of the electors and was purely bourgeois in composition, and though one of its units was tacitly monarchical in sentiment, it received general support from the Socialists as a bulwark against the menace of the extreme Right. It registered, nevertheless, another stage on the road from a working-class Democracy to a middle-class Republic.

On the formation of the new Ministry two steps were taken towards the restoration of normal relations between Germany and her late enemies. On the ratification of the Treaty, Chargés d'Affaires had been appointed; but fully accredited Ambassadors were now exchanged. The selections for Carlton House Terrace and the Wilhelmstrasse were particularly auspicious. Henceforth Dr. Sthamer, a Hamburg Senator, who had acted for six months as Chargé in London, and Lord d'Abernon, better known as Sir Edgar Vincent, vied with one another in the task of reconciliation. The second symbol of the resumption of the processes of peace was the invitation to Germany to attend a Conference at Spa during July. The Government was represented by the Chancellor Fehrenbach, the Foreign Minister Simons, and the Finance Minister Wirth. The two main subjects of discusson were coal deliveries and disarmament. The first, as an item in the problem of Reparations, will be dealt with in the following chapter. The time limit for the reduction of the army was again extended. By October the troops were not to exceed 150,000, and by 1st January 1921 the Treaty limit of 100,000 was to be reached. Though the atmosphere

at Spa was chilly, the first meeting of the ex-enemies on a footing even of nominal equality was a landmark. Relations with Great Britain were slowly beginning to improve, but the tension with France remained acute. While the Spa Conference was in session a workman hauled down the flag on the French Embassy at Berlin ; and in August a crowd, infuriated by the arrival of refugees from Upper Silesia, broke into the French and Polish Consulates at Breslau. During the remainder of 1920 and the opening months of the following year the main problem arising out of the execution of the Treaty was that of reparations, which in May 1921 involved the fall of the Fehrenbach Government and the accession to office of Wirth, who restored the original coalition of Centre, Democrats, and Socialists.

No aspect of the settlement excited more passionate emotions than the fate of Upper Silesia, which was to be determined by plebiscite within eighteen months of the ratification of the Treaty.[1] The German troops were to be immediately replaced by Allied forces ; military or semi-military associations of the inhabitants to be disbanded ; and the plebiscite area to be provisionally governed by an International Commission representing the United States, France, the British Empire, and Italy. Among the duties of the Commission was " to take all steps which it thinks proper to ensure the freedom, fairness, and secrecy of the vote. In particular, it shall have the right to order the expulsion of any person who may have attempted to distort the result of the plebiscite by methods of corruption or intimidation." Unfortunately, however, the Commission was not the dispassionate body, standing above the battle, which was contemplated by the terms of the Treaty. While the British representatives, civil and military, loyally endeavoured to carry out the letter and spirit of their mandate, the French unblushingly championed the interests of their

[1] See Sidney Osborne, *The Upper Silesian Question.*

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Polish *protégés*. The Italians, though contenting themselves with a subordinate part in the drama, leaned rather to the British than to the French side. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that the two races, both within and without the frontiers of the contested province, should conduct a furious propaganda, and the temper of the rival claimants rose with the regrettable postponement of the appeal to the ballot-box. The Poles found a leader of exceptional resource in Korfanty, who organised a local insurrection early in 1921, while the German minority was encouraged by the ardent sympathy of the Fatherland.

The magnitude of the issues at stake explained, if they did not justify, the feverish excitement aroused throughout Germany and Poland, and both parties presented a case which seemed irresistible to their friends. The Germans argued that Upper Silesia had had no dealings with Poland for six hundred years; that there could therefore be no talk of disannexation as in the case of Posen and West Prussia; that a province fertilised by the Oder and its tributaries belonged geographically to Germany; that the industrial development of the province was exclusively due to German brains and German capital; that the Polish majority consisted mainly of "Water-Poles," whose blood and speech differentiated them from their cousins across the frontier; and finally, that the mineral resources of the province, always an important item in the national economy, were now literally indispensable to the existence of a State which had lost the iron of Lorraine and the coal of the Saar, and had pledged itself to pay a colossal sum of reparations. On the Polish side it was argued that nearly two-thirds of the population were Poles; that the country had formed part of Poland in the Middle Ages; that it had only belonged to Prussia since the raid of Frederick the Great; and that the coal and other minerals of the province were even more urgently required by Poland than by Germany.

Every man and woman over twenty who lived or had been born in the plebiscite area was entitled to vote, and heroic exertions were made to bring residents and outvoters to the poll on 20th March 1921. Of the 1,220,000 citizens on the list, not less than 98 per cent. responded to the call. No one could be sure what portion, if any, of the Polish majority would vote for remaining within the Reich, and the result was awaited with breathless anxiety. Great was the rejoicing in Germany when it was announced that 707,605 had voted for German rule, and 479,359 for transfer to Poland. The result entirely vindicated Mr. Lloyd George's decision in 1919 that the province should not be adjudged to Poland without consulting the inhabitants.

The triumph of the Germans was short-lived. The Treaty ordained that the result should be determined by communes ; that the number of votes cast in each commune should be communicated by the Commission to the Allies with advice as to the frontier line ; and that in their recommendation regard should be paid both to the wishes of the inhabitants as shown by the vote, and to the geographical and economic conditions of the locality. These conditions clearly indicated partition, and the result of the poll in the four zones rendered it inevitable. In the north-west area there was a German majority of four to one ; in the south a Polish majority of two to one ; in the crowded "industrial basin," the heart of the mining district, a German majority of five to four ; in the small district of the centre a Polish majority of the same proportion. In the light of these figures it was as easy to determine the allegiance of the first two zones as it was difficult to deal with the mixed population of the third and fourth ; and, indeed, the task proved beyond the capacity of the Allied Commission. The French, who had always detested the notion of a plebiscite, drew a line favouring the Poles which the British refused to approve, and in like manner the British line was

rejected by the French as unduly partial to the Germans. The line suggested by the Italians ran between the two. The differences were not due to political partisanship alone ; for the industrial basin was an economic unit, and the Commission was encouraged to take into consideration economic factors as well as the verdict of the ballot-box.

On 12th August 1921 the Allies, divided among themselves, referred the problem to the League of Nations, whose award they accepted in advance. It was the only escape from a *cul-de-sac*, and under other circumstances the reference would have been welcome on every ground. In German eyes, however, the League was nothing more than a " Committee of Conquerors," and almost every German believed that it would take its orders from the Allies. The Council referred the problem to representatives of Belgium, Spain, China, and Brazil, while a Czech and a Swiss were consulted on technical points. The recommendation of the Council, announced on 12th October, drew a line through the industrial basin corresponding most closely with the Italian proposal, but urged the creation of a mixed Commission to ensure the continuity of economic life. The award, which was at once confirmed by the Allies, was received by a storm of anger throughout Germany. The Wirth Ministry resigned in protest, but returned to office. The decisive majority in the plebiscite, it was argued, should involve the retention of the whole province, instead of handing over a considerable part of the mining area to Poland, with 400,000 Germans who had made the district what it was. Less humiliating to national pride, but perhaps even more detrimental to national interests, was the transfer of the Polish districts of Rybnik and Pless, in which vast undeveloped seams of coal lay waiting for the needs of future generations. " Never has such a hard fate befallen our land in peace or war," cried Rathenau. " It brings home to us once again what it means to have lost the war."

The outburst of wrath against the League was misplaced; for it had performed the difficult task assigned to it with care and impartiality, and its freedom was limited by the provisions of a Treaty for which it was not responsible. Despite the passionate feelings aroused by the award, the transition from the old to the new was peacefully effected, thanks in large measure to the tact and statesmanship of M. Calonder, a former President of the Swiss Confederation, who was chosen by the League as Chairman of a Committee of three, consisting of himself, a German, and a Pole. After discussions lasting throughout the winter, a Convention between Germany and Poland of 606 articles was signed at Geneva in May 1922, and ratified in June. In July the Allied troops left Upper Silesia, the Poles and Germans having occupied the districts allotted to them by the award. A permanent mixed Commission and an Arbitral Tribunal were created, and minorities were placed under the protection of the League. The economic *condominium* saved the industrial area from chaos, and the friction has been slightly less acute than might have been expected; but the surgical operation involved a shock to the nervous system, and the division of the highly organised economic unit has been followed by a diminution of output.

Next to the partition of Upper Silesia no territorial item of the Treaty attracted more continuous attention and aroused a sharper resentment than the administration of the Saar.[1] When the Treaty came into force France took possession of the mines, and the Commission entered on its duties as the trustee of the League of Nations. The governing body, selected for a year but re-eligible, consisted of a Frenchman, a representative of the Saar district, and three members, neither French nor German. The Commission enjoyed all the administrative powers previously possessed

[1] See Sidney Osborne, *The Saar Question*; Bisschop, *The Saar Controversy*.

by the Prussian, Bavarian, and Federal Governments ; but it was bound to maintain the laws, regulations, and fiscal system in force on 11th November 1918, and only to change them after consultation with elected representatives of the territory. The inhabitants thus escaped from the military occupation of the rest of the Rhineland and retained their nationality ; for the special regime was limited to fifteen years, at the end of which the inhabitants were to determine their destinies by vote.

Though the governing Commission represented and was responsible to the League of Nations, a special position was occupied by France, the owner of the mines. French money might be used in transacting the business of the mines, and the Saar was subjected to the French customs regime. M. Rault, a French official, was appointed Chairman, with a Belgian, a Dane, a Canadian, and a representative of the inhabitants as his colleagues. The Commission was instructed to report to the League through the Secretary-General, but it was virtually an independent body. Decisions were by majority vote, and the authority of the chairman was supreme ; for the representative of the Saar was nominated, not elected, and the Canadian often found himself alone in his endeavours to govern the country in the spirit of the League. In theory M. Rault was responsible to Geneva, but in practice his eyes were turned to Paris. He was ignorant of the language of the people over whom he ruled, and he was regarded both by the Saar inhabitants and the German people as the pliant tool of France.

The first problem confronting the Commission was the officials, who were temporarily engaged on probation and were allowed by the German Government to take service under the new regime. But the considered scheme of the Commission aroused dissatisfaction which found expression in an eight-day strike of officials in July 1920, and which threatened to extend to the mines. The Commission proclaimed a state of siege,

and called on the General commanding the French garrison for help. The strike was broken by Courts-martial and expulsions ; but the use of French troops raised the question whether the garrison was justified by the Treaty. Finding the Saar under military occupation, the Commission asked France to leave a garrison " for the protection of persons and property," pending the formation of a local *gendarmerie.* The protests of the German Government to the League of Nations against this arrangement evoked the reply that the French troops cost nothing and that the Saar could not afford a sufficient local force. After the establishment of a Court of Appeal, added M. Rault, Courts-martial would no longer be used for civilians. The Court was established in June 1920, with Professor Otfried Nippold, a Swiss jurist, as President. The League made no direct attempt to interfere with the responsibility of the Commission ; but it pointedly requested to be kept informed of the progressive reduction of the garrison and the formation of a *gendarmerie.* The troops, which numbered 8000 when it entered on its task, were reduced by two-thirds within two years, but were increased again on the occasion of the miners' strike in 1923.

The catastrophic fall of the mark in Germany complicated the situation in the Saar, where a double currency prevailed. The miners were already paid in francs, and as the purchasing power of the mark melted away workers in other trades and Government *employés* asked to receive their pay in stable money. It was equally natural that the invasion of the franc should be resisted by the *rentiers* and pensioners whose fortunes were bound up with the maintenance or recovery of the mark. It was an unequal contest, and when the invasion of the Ruhr gave the dying mark its *coup de grâce,* the Commission declared the franc the sole legal currency. While the finances of Germany were rushing madly down hill, the economic life of the Saar remained relatively prosperous. But man does not

live by bread alone, and the solidarity of national sentiment was proved when the invasion of the Ruhr in January 1923 was followed by a prolonged strike of the miners. The Commission hit back by increasing the French garrison, and by restricting freedom of speech and the press under heavy penalties. The latter decree was sharply condemned at a meeting of the Council of the League and in a debate in the British House of Commons, and was withdrawn after the end of the strike ; but the complaints from the Saar were so numerous that the Council, at the instigation of the British Government, ordered an inquiry into the whole record of the Commission, all the members of which were summoned to Geneva for the purpose. The value of the investigation would have been enhanced by the presence of representatives of the Advisory Council created in 1922 ; but the publicity of the proceedings was a wholesome reminder that the League was not wholly unmindful of its responsibility. Of scarcely less importance was the appointment by the League of an official to preserve the records necessary for the plebiscite of 1935, all the more since bitter complaints reached the League that the children of the miners were being driven into French schools and denationalised. It was generally recognised that the Commission would have performed its task with greater success had the Chairman belonged to a neutral nation ; and the partiality of M. Rault was unfavourably contrasted with the tactful conduct of the British High Commissioner in the Free City of Danzig, where the embittered antagonism of Germans and Poles presented equally numerous occasions of friction.

By far the most difficult portion of the settlement to carry out was the disarmament of Germany.[1] Napoleon had vainly endeavoured to disarm Prussia,

[1] See General Morgan, "The Disarmament of Germany," *Quarterly Review*, October 1924.

and the attempts of the Allies over a much larger area fell short of their expectations. It was inevitable that a nation which had worshipped its army should fiercely resent its limitation and struggle to evade the distasteful obligations of the Treaty. The Inter-Allied Commission of Military Control, known in Germany as the Spy Commission, entered on its duties early in 1920, but its task remains unfulfilled. The good faith of successive Cabinets is not seriously contested; but their prestige is small, their will is weak, and behind the political chiefs stand military experts in *camouflage*. At the end of the war Germany, though defeated, possessed millions of trained men, a vast number of guns, including heavy artillery, enormous stores of munitions, and thousands of armament factories. To cope with a problem of this magnitude General Nollet and his colleagues required exceptional tact, firmness, and ingenuity; and even these qualities were inadequate for their task.

It has been mentioned above that the period for the reduction of the army to the standard allowed by the Treaty was successively extended from three months to twelve. By the opening of 1921 the Reichswehr consisted of not more than 100,000 men; but other portions of the elaborate scheme for disarmament embodied in the Treaty proved much more difficult to carry out. Shortly after their arrival the Commission received a note arguing that it had no power to limit the production of munitions, of which a large supply might be needed for the suppression of strikes and Communist disturbances. Attempts were made to retain heavy guns in the fortresses, and at the closing of the cadet schools it was hinted that their suppression was merely temporary. Moreover, in addition to the Reichswehr, the Sicherheitswehr (Security Police), and Einwohnerwehr (Special Constables), both of which sprang from the Revolution, harboured large numbers of trained men who were soldiers in everything but name. The Einwohnerwehr soon disappeared; but

the efforts of the Allies to secure the return of the police from a military to a civil footing and to effect their removal from barracks met with no success. Once again a defeated nation proved to its conquerors that there were limits to their power.

The two crucial tasks confronting the Commission of Control were the limitation of armaments and the supervision of effectives. Over two million rifles and thousands of guns were surrendered and destroyed; but considerable stocks were discovered by surprise visits. Though the country was divided into zones for the purpose of inspection, it was impossible to discover all the hidden stores. Even less satisfactory was the solution of the problem of armament production. Factories converted to civil uses can be rapidly reconverted, and the chemical industry, which has been largely developed since the war, could produce unlimited supplies of poison gas and high explosives at short notice. The Naval and Aeronautical Commissions of Control had an easier task; for owing to the rapid advance in design commercial aeroplanes would be of little use in war, and the building of ships cannot be screened from the public gaze.

An even more baffling problem than armaments was the control of effectives. "There has never been a moment in the history of the Commission," writes General Morgan after four years' experience, "in which every one, from the Ministry of Defence and the Commander-in-Chief down the whole chain of command, has not been active, according to a carefully worked out scheme, in thwarting control while outwardly submitting to it." Conscription was abolished by law in 1920, and the Reichswehr is limited to 100,000 men. But the army is now unified, instead of consisting of Prussian, Bavarian, Saxon, and Württemberg sections, each with its own General Staff; and it is capable of rapid expansion. Moreover, it is less an army in miniature than a cadre of instructors. Instead of enlisting for twelve years, as the Treaty provides,

recruits are trained for a short period, and the military authorities keep in touch with them after their return home through a masked system of "pensions."

In 1922 the Minister of Defence bade the Control Commission pack up, since there was nothing more for them to do. The Allies, on the other hand, complained that five important points had not been settled. The Security Police retained their military character; stores of arms were still unsurrendered; certain industries were not yet restored to a peace footing; the documents bearing on the production of armaments had not been handed over; and illegal recruiting for the Reichswehr had not been forbidden by legislation. Behind the civilian Minister stood the Commander-in-Chief of the Reichswehr, the most powerful figure in Germany. General von Seekt had distinguished himself during the war as Chief of the Staff to the victorious Mackensen, and, like Hindenburg, he accepted the Republic as an inevitable if temporary stage in the life of his country. The long-drawn and still unfinished struggle over disarmament has been a contest of wits, in which the ingenuity and persistence of the General have extorted the unwilling admiration of his antagonists on the Commission of Control.

Long before its task was completed operations were virtually suspended by the invasion of the Ruhr, which inflamed public opinion to such a point that visits of inspection were liable to provoke explosions. When control was actively resumed the personnel of the Commission had been largely reduced. In March 1924 the Allies announced that if the five conditions of 1922 were fulfilled the control would be modified. At the end of 1924, however, the Commission reported that its demands had been so inadequately fulfilled that the evacuation of the northern zone of the Rhineland, conditionally fixed by the Treaty for 10th January 1925, must be postponed. Though neither friend nor foe suggests that Germany is in a position to go to war,

the situation is not altogether without danger. Yet the partial failure to enforce the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles is a proof not of the wickedness of a particular nation but of the physical and psychological limits to the coercion of a large and resolute community.

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CHAPTER XII

REPARATIONS

No portion of the Treaty of Versailles aroused such world-wide controversy and made so much history as the problem of Reparations.[1] The task of extracting vast sums from Germany would have been sufficiently difficult had the Allies remained throughout in perfect accord; for Norman Angell was not the only publicist who combated "the great illusion" that war could be made to pay, and that the victor could recoup himself by searching the pockets of his vanquished and impoverished foe. But the situation was complicated by a grave and growing difference of opinion between Great Britain and France as to the amount to be demanded, the time and method of payment, and the means by which the debtor should be induced to fulfil his obligations. The root of the difference lay in the conflicting interests of the two Powers. The economic prosperity of Great Britain depended in large measure on the restoration of the purchasing power of the Continent, and it was therefore her wish that the wheels of German industry should be encouraged to revolve. France, on the other hand, who was almost self-supporting, feared that a prosperous neighbour might be tempted to renew the perennial conflict for the Rhine provinces and the military hegemony of Europe. The French people, it is true, desired and urgently needed the payment of reparations; but their deeper instinct was to ensure security against further attack by keeping their rival weak and poor. Approaching the problem from different standpoints, it was not surprising that the statesmen of the Allies should fumble, while the capacity of the debtor to pay diminished with every month of confusion.

The Reparations clauses of the Treaty, while charging

[1] See Toynbee, *A Survey of International Affairs*, 1920-1923; Temperley, *History of the Peace Conference*; Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, and *A Revision of the Treaty*; H. Moulton and C. McGuire, *Germany's Capacity to Pay*.

the Central Powers with the responsibility for all the loss and damage of the war, recognised that it was beyond the power of Germany to make them good. Her task was accordingly limited to compensation "for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers, and to their property by land, by sea, and from the air." Since it was impossible at short notice to calculate the extent of the damage or the cost of repair, and equally impracticable to estimate the capacity of Germany to pay, she was bidden to hand over in instalments 1000 millions in gold, securities, or commodities, before 1st May 1921. Out of this sum the expenses of the Armies of Occupation were to be met, and supplies of food and raw materials by the Allies to be paid for. By that time the Reparation Commission was to fix the total amount due, and to prescribe the manner of discharging the obligation within thirty years. Germany was empowered to submit her own proposals for simplifying or accelerating the solution of the problem within four months of the signature of the Treaty; but the offers which emanated from Berlin at various times failed to satisfy the Allies. For it was at the instigation of the British Government that "damage to civilians" had been ruled to include pensions and separation allowances, and this decision was mainly responsible for swelling the total demand to a figure which it was equally impossible for the debtor to provide and for the creditors to digest.

At the Conference at San Remo in April 1920 the Supreme Council decided to invite the German Government to oral discussion with a view to fixing the total of reparations. The meeting took place at Spa in July, where the Allies at length agreed on their respective shares of whatever might be received from Germany. France was to receive 52 per cent., Great Britain 22, Italy 10, Belgium 8. A coal protocol was signed, after hearing evidence from Stinnes as to the state of the industry and from Hue as to

the mentality and physique of the miners. The Reparation Commission had reported a default of coal deliveries, and Germany now undertook to supply two million tons per month—a slight reduction on the standard she had failed to reach. The German proposals, on the other hand, for the reconstruction of the devastated areas by German labour met with no response, and the Spa Conference broke up without advancing a step towards agreement on the amount or the method of payment of reparations.

After a meeting of Allied and German experts at Brussels in December 1920, in which a slight *rapprochement* was effected, a second Conference between debtor and creditors took place in London in February 1921. The German Delegation was headed by Dr. Simons, the Foreign Minister, who brought with him a detailed offer. Germany, he declared, could not pay more than 1500 millions, part of which he hoped to raise by a loan, and part to discharge by services and deliveries in kind. This offer was conditional on the retention of Upper Silesia and the restoration of freedom in international trade. The Allies declared the proposal inadequate, and the negotiations were broken off. A few days later the penalties were applied. Ruhrort, Duisburg, and Düsseldorf, on the threshold of the Ruhr, were occupied; a customs cordon was drawn round the Rhineland; and a tax, which the German Government was expected to make up to the exporter, was levied on imports into Allied countries. It was in vain that Germany appealed to the League against the sanctions, which it declared to be a violation of the Treaty.

The Supreme Council had vainly endeavoured to reach an agreement with Germany by direct negotiations at Spa and in London; and the Reparation Commission was now instructed to assess the damages and to estimate the amount paid by Germany before 1st May 1921. While Dr. Simons argued that the entire sum of 1000 millions due by that date had been

paid, the Commission reported that not more than 400 millions had been received. Of still greater importance was its calculation that the damage to be repaired amounted to 132 milliards of gold marks, or £6,600,000,000. On receiving these figures the Supreme Council again met in London, adopted them —minus the sums already paid—as their official demand, and agreed to occupy the Ruhr in the event of refusal. On 5th May the German Government was ordered to deliver three series of bonds, described respectively as A, B, and C. The first, totalling 600 millions, were to be delivered on 1st July ; the second and third, amounting to 1900 and 4000 millions respectively, on 1st November. The C bonds, however, were not to be issued by the Reparation Commission till it was satisfied that funds were available for interest and sinking fund. Germany was summoned to pay 50 millions during the summer, and thereafter 100 millions a year, plus the proceeds of a tax of 26 per cent. on her exports, making a maximum total of 150 millions. The postponement of the issue of the C bonds suggested that the Allies had little hope of recovering more than two and a half thousand millions.

The London ultimatum of 5th May accused Germany of failing to discharge her obligations under the Treaty, and demanded a promise within six days to make the notified payments and furnish the requisite guarantees. In the event of her refusal, the Allies would enter the Ruhr on 12th May and remain till she had fulfilled the conditions. It was the most humiliating moment since the Weimar Assembly was compelled to decide whether it would sign the Treaty of Versailles, and the knot was cut in a similar way. Fehrenbach and Simons, refusing to promise a sum vastly in excess of what they declared to be possible to pay, made way for Wirth, who formed a Ministry of acceptance a day before the expiry of the ultimatum.

The Reparation Commission was henceforth in

control of the situation, and a "Committee of Guarantees" was created to supervise the internal administration of Germany. The goodwill of the Wirth Government was beyond question, and the first milliard was punctually paid by 31st August. In October, Rathenau, the Minister of Reconstruction, met M. Loucheur, who held a similar post in the French Cabinet, at Wiesbaden. Both were business men, and they had little difficulty in reaching agreement. The Wiesbaden plan envisaged the reconstruction of the devastated areas by German plant and materials supplied by associations of contractors, who would recover their outgoings from the German Government. It was a statesmanlike arrangement, intended to supply the equivalent of seven milliards in five years, which would have eased the burden to the debtor and have served the needs of the creditor. But its fulfilment was prevented by French manufacturers who grudged the loss of orders, and by Allies who resented the French priority. Moreover, the purchase of foreign bills for the payment of reparations and the Upper Silesian award depreciated the mark to such an extent that the German Government was unable to fulfil either its immediate obligations under the London agreement or its potential liabilities under the Wiesbaden pact. So grave, indeed, was the plight of the German Treasury that Great Britain and Italy began to favour the policy of a moratorium.

A fresh chapter opens with the Cannes Conference of January 1922, when the British and French Premiers, after listening to Rathenau, fixed German payments for the current year. The apprehension that M. Briand was being led by Mr. Lloyd George too far along the slippery path of compromise caused his fall, and with the installation of M. Poincaré at the Quai d'Orsay the rudder was grasped by an iron hand. The new Premier was unable to cancel the Cannes decision to grant a partial moratorium; but

his first Memorandum to the Reparation Commission breathed a spirit of angry impatience which boded ill for the future of Europe. After commenting with severity on the failure of Germany to pay the covenanted thousand millions before May of the previous year, the deficits in her coal deliveries, and her refusal to transfer her gold reserve from Berlin to Cologne or Coblenz, he proceeded to argue that a Court would never allow a period of grace to a private debtor if he behaved in a similar manner, but would empower his creditors to seize his property. Reparations, he continued, were not a first charge on her revenue, and German citizens were taxed less than the Allies. If it were proved that the currency crisis was due, not, as the German Government maintained, to the payment of reparations, but to inept financial administration and bad faith, it would then be the duty of the Commission no longer to avoid the responsibilities of its task, and to make the fullest use of its powers of control, in order that the claims of the Allied Powers should be satisfied. From this attitude of frowning mistrust M. Poincaré was never to depart, and the coercion of a fraudulent debtor became henceforth the main plank in his political programme. M. Dariac was dispatched to Germany on a secret mission of inquiry; and his report, which soon leaked out, urged not only the control of the industries of the Rhineland, but its political autonomy under Franco-Belgian patronage.

While the dominant party in France believed that it was the will, not the capacity, to pay that was lacking at Berlin, the British Government and their financial advisers had come to realise that, whatever the errors of the German Government in the past, an attempt to enforce immediate payment would damage if not destroy the chances of industrial recovery and thereby frustrate the whole purpose of the reparation policy. Mr. Lloyd George had travelled far since he issued the London ultimatum in May 1921, and he appeared at

the Genoa Conference in April 1922 as an apostle of peace and reconciliation. Once again the massive personality of Rathenau, now promoted to the post of Foreign Minister, impressed his audience ; but his unexpected conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo with Russia while the Conference was in progress weakened the arm of the British Premier, who was already fighting against desperate odds. For M. Poincaré detested the Conference to which his predecessor had assented, and M. Barthou, his representative, piled obstacles in the path. An ominous speech by the French Premier at Bar-le-Duc on 24th April was intended not less for London than for Berlin. " If Germany does not fulfil the terms of the Reparation Commission, and if the Commission declares a default, the Allies will have the right and therefore the duty to protect their interests by measures which it would be infinitely desirable to adopt in common, but, if necessary, can be taken by any individual nation concerned. We ardently desire to maintain the union of all the Allies ; but we shall defend the French cause in full independence, and we shall not neglect any of the arms which the Treaty supplies. We shall not allow our unfortunate country to succumb under the weight of reparations side by side with a Germany which refuses to make the necessary effort to pay her debts." The speech sounded the death-knell of the Genoa Conference and clearly foreshadowed the invasion of the Ruhr.

In July 1922 the Wirth Government informed the Reparation Commission that the mark was falling rapidly in the effort to pay the sums fixed at Cannes, and that a financial catastrophe was inevitable if Germany were forced to continue to buy foreign currencies on a large scale. At this moment the Stinnes-Lubersac agreement revived the policy of the Wiesbaden agreement ; but untoward events were to prevent it bearing fruit. To avoid the crash a complete moratorium was demanded for the latter half of 1922 and the years 1923 and 1924. When the Allies met

in London in August to consider this communication, the rift within the lute could no longer be concealed from the world. While Sir John Bradbury, the British representative on the Reparation Commission, advised a total moratorium for cash payments for the remainder of 1922, M. Poincaré proposed that the Allies should take over "productive guarantees" such as State forests and State mines in the Ruhr. This plan was opposed not only by Great Britain but by Italy and Belgium, and for the first time an Inter-Allied Conference broke up in open discord. As the autumn advanced, Sir John Bradbury's conviction deepened that the only way to obtain reparations on a large scale was by giving Germany a breathing-time. Cash payments, he counselled, should be completely, and deliveries in kind almost completely suspended for two or even four years, in order to allow the balancing of the budget and the stabilisation of the mark. The Reparation Commission, he added, should move its seat from Paris to Berlin, in order to supervise and foster the recovery of the patient. Such proposals, far-sighted as they were, had no chance of acceptance, since M. Poincaré vetoed any moratorium unaccompanied by securities.

In January 1923 Mr. Bonar Law, who had recently succeeded Mr. Lloyd George as the head of a purely Conservative Ministry, journeyed to Paris with a staff of experts and an elaborate scheme in his pocket. The change of Government had made no difference in the British attitude, and Sir John Bradbury remained the trusted counsellor of the new Ministers as of the old. In August 1922 Germany had received permission to meet her cash payments for the remainder of the year by treasury bills; but she was slightly in arrears with deliveries of timber and coal. The Reparation Commission had already notified default on three previous occasions, but no action had followed. The German Government now attempted to explain the shortage by the continuous fall of the mark, with its effect on contracts, and added that it was also unable to supply

its own needs. Sir John described the failure as "almost microscopic," and sharply denounced the French for making a mountain out of a molehill. "This trumpery accusation," he cried, "is only brought before the Commission as a preparation for an offensive in other fields." The charge was only too true, for the Allies had at last come to the parting of the ways. The British scheme which was now produced proposed the establishment of a Finance Council at Berlin with far-reaching powers, under the *ex officio* chairmanship of the German Minister of Finance. The total debt was fixed at two and a half thousand millions, with a moratorium of four years, except for certain reparations in kind. The plan was curtly rejected by the French, who vetoed the reduction of the total Allied claim, reiterated their objection to a moratorium without pledges, and particularly resented the proposed substitution of a Finance Council with a German chairman sitting at Berlin for the Reparation Commission under a French chairman sitting at Paris. The French protest was supported whole-heartedly by Belgium and with less conviction by Italy. The differences between London and Paris were too wide to bridge, and Mr. Bonar Law returned home, declining to take part in the application of the rival scheme which he was unable to prevent.

On 10th January 1923 the French and Belgian Governments announced that a Mission of Control would be sent to the Ruhr, in consequence of default in wood and coal. The Mission, it was added, would be composed of engineers, with power to watch the operations of the Coal Syndicate, and to assure the strict application of the programme fixed by the Commission of Reparations. The German Government was invited to instruct its officials to obey the orders of the Mission. "The French and Belgian Governments have no military or political operations in view. They are merely sending sufficient troops to ensure the safety of the Mission and to guarantee the execution of its

mandate." The normal life of the community was not to be disturbed; but if the operations were resisted, either by action or abstention, whatever coercion was needed would be applied. The velvet glove failed to cover the iron hand, and the Franco-Belgian communication was a declaration of war in everything but name. The Allies were empowered by the Treaty of Versailles to take coercive action if Germany evaded her obligations, but the legal advisers of the British Cabinet declared that this right could only be exercised jointly. The United States expressed no opinion on the legality of the invasion; but their opinion of its policy was announced by the order for the immediate recall of the American garrison in the Rhineland. The Allied front had been broken, and M. Poincaré had to console himself for the alienation of the Anglo-Saxon world by the solitary approval of Belgium. Italy sent no troops, and her engineers were soon withdrawn.

The invasion of the Ruhr was only the latest turn of the French screw. The occupation of the Rhineland and the bridge-heads by the Allied forces was bound to give rise to friction; but the tact of the British and American garrisons rendered the fulfilment of their duties far less onerous to the inhabitants of the zones of Cologne and Coblenz than the pin-pricks of the French at Mainz. Moreover, though each of the occupying Powers possessed its allotted sphere, the whole territory was subject to a Rhineland Commission, over which M. Tirard presided. Further, while the Anglo-Saxon Powers were only represented by a moderate force, the French troops numbered tens of thousands. Intense annoyance was aroused by the requisition of public buildings, schools, and private dwellings for the accommodation of officers and men at a time when Germany, like other belligerents, was suffering from an acute shortage of houses. The fiercest resentment, however, was aroused by certain aspects of the French administration, which appeared to Germans, and not to Germans alone, to be illegitimate concomitants of

the occupation. The use of coloured troops during the war had been fiercely denounced, though Germany would doubtless have used a similar weapon had she had the chance. The employment of black and yellow men, however, for garrisoning the cities of the Rhineland after the conclusion of peace appeared to German eyes an unspeakable outrage, and stories of brothels and of assaults on white women were told with shuddering horror from one end of the Fatherland to the other. Scarcely if at all less monstrous seemed the open encouragement by highly placed French officers and officials of the separatist movement organised by Dorten, Smeets, and other renegade Rhinelanders. The short-sighted vindictiveness of M. Tirard, General Mangin, General Degoutte and their colleagues filled the American Commander-in-Chief, General Allen, with the gravest apprehensions for the peace of Europe, which he confided to his *Rhineland Journal.*

It was with minds thus saturated with bitter memories of the occupation that the inhabitants of the Ruhr watched the entry of the M.I.C.U.M. (Mission Inter-Alliée de Contrôle des Usines et des Mines) on 11th January 1923. The Mission was escorted to Essen by French and Belgian troops under General Degoutte, the Commander-in-Chief of the French army on the Rhine. On the same day he proclaimed a state of siege, ordered the local officials to take their instructions from the French military authorities, and demanded the surrender of arms in private hands. The police were allowed to continue their functions, and the press, posts, telegraphs, and telephones remained for the moment without interference. Any sabotage, on the other hand, any written or spoken incitement to disorder, or any attack on the honour or safety of the troops would be punished by Council of War. No one who was acquainted with the embittered sentiments of the German people at the opening of 1923 could have expected the Mission to be received without active or passive resistance, and economic supervision rapidly

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developed into military occupation. Deep as had been the hatred of Germany for France during the years since the conclusion of the war, it was nothing to the fierce flame kindled by the realisation of the Poincaré design.

The first challenge to alien rule came from the Coal Syndicate, which migrated from Essen to Hamburg; and Berlin followed with a manifesto denouncing the illegality of separate action. The German Government raised "a solemn protest before the whole world against the violence committed upon a defenceless people," and announced its decision to cease deliveries to the countries taking part in the invasion. The French and Belgian Governments retaliated by declaring Germany in general default. The campaign of passive resistance thus begun spread quickly from the mines to posts, telegraphs, and trains. Shops refused to sell, requisition orders were ignored, and the papers declined to publish official declarations. The fighting line was vigorously supported by the political base, which not only undertook to maintain all who lost their livelihood or were expelled from their homes, but forbade German citizens to execute foreign orders under pain of heavy penalties.

The legend of an Economic Mission quickly disappeared, and the antagonists settled down to a contest of wits and will. Troops were poured into the Ruhr, and the necessity of safeguarding their communications involved the Left Bank in the struggle. Now that the United States had withdrawn, Great Britain stood alone on the Rhineland Commission, which was employed by France and Belgium to further their aims in the Ruhr. In the British zone, however, which separated the French and Belgian spheres of influence, most of the new special ordinances of the Commission were ignored, and the railways continued to be administered by Germans under British control. The conflict grew ever fiercer, coercion provoking resistance and resistance stimulating coercion. Tens of thousands

of State officials and employees were expelled, often at a moment's notice, Courts-martial dealt out punishments with unstinting hand, the Press was muzzled, the directors of the Krupp firm were sentenced to enormous fines and long imprisonment for obstruction, and the towns were deprived of their burgomasters. Under such circumstances bloodshed was inevitable, and in Essen French soldiers in panic fired on the workmen. Every instrument was employed to break the spirit of the population. Meanwhile the coal accumulated at the pit-head, and France only obtained what she could herself remove with the aid of a skeleton service run by an imported personnel.

The programme of securing reparations by seizing the property of the debtor had failed, and the expenses of a contested occupation outweighed the thin trickle of deliveries. For a time it seemed possible that Germany might hold out long enough to convince the French people that the invasion was a mistake. No Government at Berlin could have tamely acquiesced in the aggression ; yet Cuno, the successor of Wirth, promised more than he could perform. German finances were already tottering to their fall when the invasion began, and the burden of supporting a province with six million inhabitants drove down the mark to unplumbed depths. The coal and furnaces of the Ruhr were the sinews of Germany, and when the French drew a cordon round the province, the industrial and financial life of the Reich was doomed to slow strangulation. M. Poincaré watched the convulsive struggles of his victim with grim satisfaction, confident that hunger and chaos would sooner or later bring her to his feet.

After six months of resistance it became clear that France could hold out longest, and the intransigent Cuno made way for Stresemann. The leader of the National Liberals made an offer of conditional submission which evoked no response, and six weeks later, on 27th September, he surrendered unconditionally. The orders of the German Government supporting passive

resistance were withdrawn, and the embargo on reparation deliveries to France and Belgium was raised. It was naturally expected in Germany, as elsewhere, that the collapse of opposition would bring immediate relief; but M. Poincaré was determined that his hated enemy should drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs. Throughout the autumn the character of the occupation remained unchanged, and a provisional arrangement was dictated by the M.I.C.U.M. How little the heart of the French Government had been softened by capitulation was shown by the recrudescence of separatism in the Rhineland under French auspices. The Palatinate in particular became the prey of a gang of gaol-birds, whose yoke drove the exasperated population to savage reprisals.

The French Government pretended to be pleased with its handiwork. M. Poincaré had triumphed in a contest of wills, and had shown Germany who was master. But the franc had halved its value during his Premiership, and the capacity of the debtor to furnish large sums in reparation was diminished. Instead of creating the "will to pay," as he had foretold, he had created the will to fight. The experiences and sufferings of the year 1923 in the Rhineland and the Ruhr filled the youth of Germany with the same passionate resolve that had nerved Prussia to the Wars of Liberation. When nations are goaded beyond endurance they are apt to turn on their oppressor without counting the cost. With the mark at twenty billions to the pound, it might well seem as if Germany must perish; but at this moment, when everything seemed lost, a heroic attempt to save the situation was made by Dr. Luther, the Minister of Finance, and Dr. Schacht, who had recently succeeded Havenstein as head of the Reichsbank. On 15th November 1923 the Rentenmark made its appearance, secured on the land and houses of the country. The sum of sixty million sterling was insufficient for the needs of the community, but it was unsafe to issue more at the outset. For a

time the depreciated mark and the Rentenmark circulated concurrently, but confidence in the latter gradually took root. After the terrifying experiences of the last few years, when savings, salaries, and wages melted away like snow in the hand, the stabilisation of the mark was an immense psychological relief. It had been the custom of the sufferers to lay the blame for the currency chaos on the Allies ; but there were also factors nearer home. Since the fall of Erzberger no real effort had been made until now to grapple with the financial situation, and taxes on wealth had been paid months after their assessment when the progressive devaluation of the mark rendered their yield almost negligible. If the mark could be stabilised in the autumn of 1923, with its value at twenty billions to the pound, all the more could and should it have been stabilised before the invasion of the Ruhr diminished the assets and increased the burdens of the Reich.

In addition to sowing a harvest of hate beyond the Rhine, the action of France had been watched with growing disapproval across the Channel, not only as infringing the Treaty of Versailles, but as diminishing the assets of the common debtor. The blunt language of Lord Curzon's despatch of 11th August 1923 left the Entente Cordiale hanging by a thread. During the closing months of the year Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay engaged in a long-range bombardment. In the teeth of French opposition Lord Curzon ordered a British Consul to investigate the scandals of separatism in the Palatinate, and his report confirmed the German contention that the movement was initiated and financed by France. M. Poincaré retaliated by demanding that the railways in the British zone should be handed over to the Franco-Belgian *régie*. After a brief period, during which the British were in a state of virtual blockade, a compromise was reached by which a limited amount of transport was furnished for the invaders of the Ruhr.

The decision of the French Government in January

1923 to take independent action left untouched the Spa percentages. During the period of passive resistance in the Ruhr the Cuno Government had begged for an international expert inquiry into the capacity of Germany to pay. The proposal was approved in Great Britain and America, but France and Belgium replied that no discussion could take place while Berlin was resisting French authority. Great Britain and the United States, like Germany, would have preferred an inquiry by a body entirely independent of the Reparation Commission, which Lord Curzon described in his celebrated despatch as "an instrument of Franco-Belgian policy alone." Just for that very reason, however, the French Premier declined to supersede the Commission in whose keeping he believed the interests of France to be secure.

Though M. Poincaré had no intention of submitting the claims of France to the arbitration of international experts, he consented to allow an investigation of the problem to be held under the auspices of the Reparation Commission, subject to the condition that there should be no whittling down of the Allied claims. The announcement was made at the meeting of that body on 30th November. "The Reparation Commission decides to constitute two Committees of experts belonging to the Allied and Associated Countries. The one is to be charged with the inquiry into the means of balancing the budget and the measures to be taken to stabilise the currency, the other to consider the means of estimating the value of capital which has escaped from Germany and of bringing about its return." It was a limited reference, and there was no suggestion that France would regard herself as bound by the report; but the co-operation of prominent Americans, with the approval of their Government, strengthened the authority of the Committees in advance. General Dawes was appointed chairman of the more important of the two bodies, while Mr. M'Kenna presided over the inquiry into the flight of capital. By the end of

January 1924 both were hard at work, and on 9th April they presented their reports to the Reparation Commission.

The report of the M'Kenna Committee, which estimated German capital abroad at between 300 and 400 millions, called for no executive action. It attributed the flight to the errors of the German Government, the action of speculators, and the wish to avoid payment of reparation and taxation, as well as to the natural desire of a people suffering from a falling currency to save something from the wreck. No heroic remedies were proposed, and the sensible conclusion was reached that the only way to stop the outflow of capital and promote its return was to remove its causes, of which inflation was the chief. It was suggested that the German Government should temporarily suspend the statutory penalties for evasion, and should offer special terms for subscription to loans made in foreign currencies. The flight of capital, in other words, was only a particular aspect of the national sickness which the Dawes Committee was instructed to heal.

General Dawes and his colleagues approached their task "as business men anxious to obtain effective results," and their report embodied a practical programme. The first step was to safeguard the German currency by a new bank of issue with the exclusive right of issuing paper money for the next fifty years, and with the duty of receiving the funds collected for the Allies. The bank was to be under German management, but its operations were to be supervised by a General Board consisting of seven Germans and seven foreigners, of British, French, Italian, Belgian, American, Dutch, and Swiss nationality. The new institution was to have a capital of 20 millions, raised in Germany and abroad, while a foreign loan of 40 millions was to be deposited as a contribution to its gold reserves, and as a means of financing deliveries in kind during the period of

rehabilitation. Payments were to be made, firstly, from the ordinary budget, railway bonds, transport tax, industrial debentures; secondly, by issuing 550 millions of first mortgage bonds on the railways, which were to be transferred from the control of the Government to a joint stock company, with a German majority on the Board; thirdly, by a contribution from German industry of 250 millions in first mortgage bonds.

In imposing these burdens on the German people the Report pointed out that its shoulders were not at present strong enough to bear their full weight. During a "moratorium period" of two years the payments were to be 50 and 60 millions respectively, and during a subsequent "transition period" of two years, 60 and 87 millions. The full payment of 125 millions was to begin in the fifth year. These sums were to include the cost of the armies of occupation and the Commissions of Control. Not less important than the moratorium was the pregnant observation that the whole report postulated the restoration of the fiscal and economic unity of the Reich. In other words, though the Ruhr was not mentioned, the French and Belgians received notice to quit. The revenues from customs, alcohol, tobacco, and sugar were to be assigned to the creditors as security, and to be transferred to the Agent for Reparation Payments immediately they were received. The Report declared that the proposed safeguards should not embarrass the normal economic functioning of the Reich. "Great care has been taken in fixing conditions of supervision over Germany's internal organisation to impose the minimum of interference consistent with proper protection. This general plan, fair and reasonable in its nature, if accepted leads to an ultimate and lasting peace. The rejection of these proposals by the German Government means the deliberate choice of a continuance of economical demoralisation, eventually involving her people in hopeless misery."

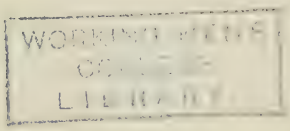
Though the figures of the tribute due in the fifth year appeared to some critics impracticably high, the Report was generally welcomed as a sincere attempt to solve a problem of baffling complexity. Had France consented to such an expert inquiry at an earlier stage, much needless suffering would have been saved. The Reparation Commission promptly approved the Report, the German Government declared its readiness to co-operate in its recommendations, and the Commission formally transmitted it to the Allies. While Great Britain, Italy, and Belgium accepted it as it stood, France replied in effect that the Ruhr could not be evacuated until Germany had put the scheme into operation. Had M. Poincaré remained in power the execution of the scheme might have been indefinitely held up by his quibbles and qualifications ; but, happily for the peace and prosperity of the world, he was defeated at the elections held in May. His successor, M. Herriot, was not only a good Frenchman, but a good European, as anxious as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who had succeeded Mr. Baldwin as Prime Minister in January 1924, to inaugurate the reign of peace. The Allies met in London on 16th July to discuss numerous questions involved in the execution of the plan, and when agreement had been reached the German delegation, headed by the Chancellor Marx and the Foreign Minister Stresemann, was called into council. Every member of the London Conference desired its success, and the discussions were conducted in an atmosphere of cordiality unknown at any previous meeting between antagonists in the late war. The evacuation of the Ruhr proved the hardest nut to crack. The German delegates suggested a maximum of six months, but reluctantly accepted M. Herriot's undertaking to withdraw within a year. The Dawes plan was approved by all the parties concerned on 16th August, and by the end of the month, after the French and German Parliaments had given their consent, the

documents were formally signed. The end of a long controversy, of which the earlier stages reflected little credit on either side, was in sight, and the eagerness with which the investing public raised the loan of forty millions required to launch the scheme was welcome evidence of the world-wide confidence in its success. The only point left over for future settlement was the total sum to be paid. Meanwhile, the London figure of six and a half thousand millions remained the nominal claim of the Allies.

The establishment of the Rentenbank had checked the headlong descent of the mark; but the winter of 1923–4 brought little relief to a harassed people. Prices were high, unemployment was rife, credit was scarce, the stability of the Rentenmark was doubtful, and M. Poincaré still reigned at Paris. Under these circumstances the Moderates and the Left looked forward to the elections of May 1924 with ill-concealed apprehension. Their anxieties proved to be well-founded. During the four years that had elapsed since the last election the "policy of fulfilment" appeared to have brought little but political humiliation and economic ruin, and the change of sentiment was registered in the ballot-box. The Nationalists returned the largest party in the Reichstag, gaining votes at the expense of the National Liberals, while a new Fascist party of the extreme Right, inspired by Ludendorff and Hitler, won thirty-two seats. At the other end of the scale the Communists polled three million, and emerged as a formidable party with sixty seats, their triumph being won at the cost of the reunited Socialists. The Centre, impervious to the changes of political opinion, retained its following, but the Democrats experienced a fresh rebuff. It was the day of extreme men, and the growth of the intransigent Right was expected to ensure the triumph of M. Poincaré in the French elections due a fortnight later.

The victory of the Left in France changed the face

of the landscape, and steadied the nerves of the German people. The desperate mood of the spring passed away, and half of the Nationalist party supported the Government in its acceptance of the Dawes plan. The signature of the London agreement was followed by the partial evacuation of the Ruhr, the restoration of the exiles to their homes, the return of the Rhineland railways to German hands, and the decision to seek admission to the League of Nations. The position of the Moderates, which had been weakened by the election in May, could now, it was believed, be retrieved by a fresh appeal to the people. The appeal took place in November and partially justified the hopes of the Government. Both Fascists and Communists suffered heavily ; the Socialists won back part of the ground they had lost ; and an enormous majority of the electorate ratified the Dawes settlement. Confidence in the Rentenmark was now firmly established ; bank credits became easier to obtain ; and the recovery of fiscal self-determination in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, after five years of bondage, enabled Germany to discuss commercial treaties with her late enemies on equal terms. From an economic point of view the year 1924 closed with a broadening belt of light in the sky.



CHAPTER XIII

CAPITAL AND LABOUR

The Revolution of November 1918, which overthrew dynastic autocracy, threatened for a moment the traditional organisation of society. For several weeks power was in the hands of the Socialists, and socialisation was in the air. The Provisional Government, however, consisted of good democrats who believed that far-reaching social changes should be made, if made at all, by the will of the people constitutionally expressed, and after full discussion of all the interests involved. In the Constituent Assembly elected in January 1919 the Socialists, though the strongest individual party, were outnumbered by the representatives of the bourgeoisie, and a Coalition Ministry became inevitable. The Socialists were never again in a position to dictate policy or control legislation, and the Third Estate quickly regained control of the machine. Feudalism vanished with the political influence of the Junkers ; but Capitalism rose like a phœnix from the ashes of the *ancien régime*, and established an ascendency more complete, because more uncontested, than it had exercised before the war. While the politicians were floundering in a sea of troubles, the lords of industry seized and retained the helm.[1] The two organisations, which before the war represented respectively the heavy and the finishing industries, were merged after its conclusion in the Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie, the discussions in which, though conducted behind closed doors, affected the life of the people scarcely less than the Reichstag debates.

The most significant feature of industrial organisation in Germany at the opening of the twentieth century was the tendency to substitute " vertical " for " horizontal " trusts. The great names of Krupp and Thyssen, Siemens and Rathenau, stood for domination in a limited field, and the founders of the " pure "

[1] The best account of the new capitalism is in M. P. Price, *Germany in Transition*, 1923.

or "horizontal" trust aimed merely at co-operation between firms engaged in a particular branch of industry. The success of the experiment suggested an extension of the principle of amalgamation, and in the last decade of peace the "mixed" or "vertical" trust, interested in correlated activities, such as coal, iron, and engineering, began to make its appearance. The utility of an organisation dealing in everything from the raw material to the finished article was obvious. Competition was diminished, risks were distributed, economies were effected, and capital was obtained on easier terms from the banks.

The tendency to unification was accelerated by the war, which increased the power of the coal and iron magnates and allowed them to dictate to the finishing industries. The disappearance of a powerful government in 1918 and the defeat of the movement for socialisation in the early months of 1919 removed every obstacle to the domination of the great industrialists, who proceeded to reorganise the economic life of the country on the basis of mixed or vertical trusts. This transformation will always remain connected with the name of Stinnes, perhaps the most remarkable figure of post-war Germany.[1] The family fortunes had been founded by Hugo's grandfather, who was not only interested in coal but supplied the first steam-tugs for transport on the Rhine. The business was developed by his sons, and the young Stinnes entered the firm at the age of twenty-one. Two years later, having learned all that his father and uncles could teach him, he took out his share of the capital—a modest 50,000 marks—and founded a business of his own, dealing, like the parent firm, in coal and shipping. His surpassing ability was quickly recognised, and his opportunity came with his appointment as chairman of the Deutsch-Luxemburg Company, a large vertical trust owning coal and iron mines, smelting furnaces, rolling mills, and shipyards. Though the business was not in

[1] See Brinckmeyer, *Stinnes*; and Harden, *Köpfe*, vol. 4.

a very flourishing condition, he quickly restored its fortunes, and strengthened it by fusions and agreements with other firms. The Deutsch-Luxemburg did not exhaust his energies; for he aided Thyssen in building up the coal and steel syndicates, the two great bodies which regulated output and price in the Rhineland and the Ruhr, and he was connected with a company which supplied the whole valley of the Rhine with electricity and gas.

The war brought enormous profits to Stinnes and his undertakings. Factories were bought or built, and the ships of two Hamburg companies, which were lying idle in the Elbe, became the nucleus of the Stinnes fleet. A further source of enrichment was found in the exploitation of French and Belgian property in the occupied territories. Before the *débâcle* he transferred part of his wealth to Holland, where he founded a bank registered as a Dutch company, money flowing back for reinvestment as Dutch capital. At the end of the struggle he occupied the centre of the stage. Emil Rathenau had passed away; his son only gave a portion of his wonderful mind to business; and Ballin had committed suicide when his life-work was swept away in the flood. The Treaty of Versailles deprived the Deutsch-Luxemburg Company of half its properties; but it received compensation from Berlin, and the French group into whose hands they had passed promised a large annual supply of iron. Among the directors was Kirdorf, the founder of the Gelsenkirchen Mining Company, which was equally hit by the Treaty, and which was now linked with the Deutsch-Luxemburg. The third pillar of the resulting "Rhine-Elbe Union" was the Bochum Union of Mines and Steel, each of the companies retaining its own management.

The next and more sensational amalgamation was with the Siemens-Schuckert Company, the largest electro-technical business in the world after the A.E.G. The colossal organisation thus created was henceforth known as the "Rhine-Siemens-Schuckert-Elbe Union."

The combine, which produced raw materials in the shape of coal and iron ore, and sold partially and wholly manufactured articles, from iron and steel to machinery and ships, continued to grow till it resembled an octopus. After the amalgamation with Siemens, copper and aluminium mines were purchased for electrical purposes, oil-fields to supply the ships, and forests in East Prussia to provide pit-props for the mines. Passing beyond the frontiers of Germany, Stinnes acquired the "Alpine Montanagesellschaft," which controlled the Austrian metal industry, and purchased coal mines in Czecho-Slovakia. In Hungary he joined an English banking group in founding the Anglo-Hungarian Bank, which financed the Budapest Harbour Company. He next established contact with the Schneider-Creusot group in France, and with the Berliner Handelsgesellschaft, which was connected with the A.E.G. and possessed international connections. There seemed, indeed, to be no limit either to his ambitions or his resources. Hotels, fisheries, paper-mills were added to the list, landed properties were purchased in the Mark of Brandenburg, while among his unfulfilled ambitions were the taking over of the railways from the impoverished Reich, and a Franco-German coal and steel trust on the basis of a profitable exchange of French iron and German coke. A Socialist writer computed that he controlled one-fifth of the total production of Germany, and a competent British observer reported in 1923, the last year of his life, that he was interested in no less than 1388 undertakings.

The Napoleon of industry lived without ostentation in a Berlin hotel. "It is economics, not politics, that matters," he observed; and economics filled his life. The world of business was as familiar to him as the keyboard of a piano to the professional musician. He possessed the same faculty of rapid decision and unerring foresight which made Pierpont Morgan the greatest financier of the New World. Instead of exporting capital after the war in panic, he invested it

in the development of industry at home, and to that extent helped his country through the critical years by increasing the demand for labour. The arch-capitalist paid good wages, was a friend of the Trade Union leader Legien, and had no morbid fears of Labour. His interest in politics as such was small. He sat in Parliament as a National Liberal, but rarely intervened in debate, preferring to express his opinions in the more congenial atmosphere of the Economic Council. His purchase of half a dozen newspapers, none of outstanding importance, was due almost as much to a desire to find a market for his paper-mills as to the wish to control public opinion. Yet, though he never aspired to a leading part in the political arena, he was too big a man to escape political significance. The Allies watched with angry suspicion the acrobatic performances of a multi-millionaire whom the German Government appeared unable or unwilling to tax, while France was forced to restore her devastated districts out of her own pocket. Moreover, the concentration of so much wealth and power in a single hand supplied the Socialists with a new argument for nationalisation and the Communists with a fresh excuse for revolution.

Stinnes was the greatest but not the only virtuoso in the art of amalgamation, and his colossal trust possessed a rival worthy of his steel. The A.E.G. (Allgemeine Elektricität Gesellschaft), one of the greatest of the finishing industries, lacked direct access to raw materials; and when Stinnes, already the master of iron and coal, acquired the Siemens-Schuckert Company, it was compelled by the approach of danger to broaden its base. Walther Rathenau, the nominal head of the firm, was increasingly immersed in politics, and the first step was taken by the general manager, Felix Deutsch, who in 1920 obtained credits for raw material from relatives in the New York banking-house of Kuhn Loeb in return for shares. In the following year the A.E.G. secured control of several small firms, which possessed not only raw materials, but also foreign

banking connections. The Company, having freed itself from the danger of being sucked into the Stinnes net, proceeded to follow his example, and rapidly built up a vertical trust, even vaster than its model, by the usual method of the exchange of shares and interlocking directorates.

The combine consisted in the main of three large units, the A.E.G., the Otto Wolff Company, and Krupp. The second, founded by Jewish financiers in Cologne after the war, traded in metal products, and grew rapidly by amalgamating a number of small mining, smelting, and engineering concerns, some of which, through possessions in Luxemburg and Lorraine, had retained useful connections with foreign banking groups. Wolff became export agent for the A.E.G., and also obtained control of a number of companies possessing mines, in some of which French and Dutch capital was interested. The agreement with Krupp, now engaged in the manufacture of machinery, railway material, and agricultural implements, was made in 1921, and provided an outlet in Russia, where Krupp possessed a concession for the supply of agricultural machines and a share in an international *consortium* to exploit mining property in the Urals. The basis was broadened still further by contracts with Anglo-Dutch capital, German-American shipping, and the Schneider-Creusot and Loucheur groups of French industrialists. Thus the younger trust was more international than the elder, and was believed to have double its capital at its command. A few of the Rhineland magnates remained unconnected with either of the two mammoth combines; but the convenience and safety of a vertical trust were as obvious as that of an ocean liner on a rough sea. But for the death of Stinnes in 1924, at the age of fifty-three, it is not impossible that the rivals might have sought and found a *rapprochement*.

Though the industrial activity of Germany since the war has been mainly due to private enterprise, the Government has played its part in rebuilding the edifice

of national prosperity. Using its powers under Article 156 of the Constitution, the State has created coal, iron, and potash syndicates, on which the Reich employers, employees, and consumers are represented, and which attempt to control production and export prices. The lavish support given by public bodies to public works in a time of financial chaos and default strengthened the conviction of France that Germany was richer than she was willing to admit. It was, however, the tradition of German rule to foster the development of national resources by capital outlay, and the success of the policy pursued by the Empire encouraged the Republic to tread in its footsteps. At the head of the list of such large-scale enterprises stands the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal, destined to open a route for ships of 1500 tons from the North Sea to the Black Sea. The Rhine-Main-Danube Company was formed in 1921, and the canal connecting the Main with the Danube is now open to Aschaffenburg. The Ludwigskanal of King Ludwig I of Bavaria is being utilised, and the remaining 380 miles to Passau are expected to be covered by 1932. The junction of the rivers is not the only task, for the navigation of the Main and the Danube is being facilitated by locks. Thus Westphalian coal will flow east, while food, timber, petroleum, and other merchandise will travel west. The scheme is estimated to cost thirty-five million marks, which is raised by the Reich, Bavaria, and other States, towns, and syndicates, all loans being jointly guaranteed by the Reich and the Bavarian Government. Such enterprises bear eloquent witness to the hope of national resurrection.

The keen brains who controlled German industry knew precisely how to take advantage of an unprecedented money situation. For the inflation which began during the war they were not responsible ; but it was to their immediate, if not to their ultimate, interest that the policy should continue after the restoration of peace. Confronted by a world of

victorious enemies Germany could only recover her export trade by cheapening the costs of production ; and the rapid fall of the mark enabled her both to undercut her competitors abroad and to monopolise the home market. Work was thus provided for the worker ; but while the employer reaped substantial profits, which he invested abroad or in unwasting securities at home, the employees gained nothing but the barest living. Though the bread subsidy remained till 1922, the consumption per head was largely diminished, and the weekly tax of 10 per cent. on wages reduced the standard of life still further. Moreover, when the mark began to fall, not only from week to week but from hour to hour, wages melted away before they could be turned into commodities. Thus the anomalous spectacle was witnessed of rich industrialists and busy factories on the one side, with underfed workers and a bankrupt State on the other. Low rents and an eight-hour day were but a poor compensation for low wages and short rations. "When capital is threatened by confiscatory taxation and chaotic administration," wrote the *Rhenisch-Westphälische Zeitung*, the unblushing organ of the great industrialists, "it goes abroad. By a mere stroke of a pen or a mere change in book-keeping it is possible to transfer capital from one end of the world to the other." But while the magnates through their international affiliations could dodge the tax-collector and turn the falling mark to their own profit, the worker, like the small middle-class investor, had no means of escape.

The inability of the Socialists, despite their substantial representation in the Cabinet and the Reichstag, to carry out their programme or to check the domination of capital, was the main cause of the rise of the Communist Party, whose growth is the most significant phenomenon in the world of labour since the war.[1] The large plans of socialisation had dwindled

[1] The best account of German Communism is in Price, *Germany in Transition.*

to a project for nationalising the mines ; and even here it proved impossible to devise a scheme acceptable to the State, the mine owners, and the men. The stampede of disillusioned workers into the Communist camp strengthened the capitalist system instead of weakening it, since the necessity of fighting on two fronts reduced the numbers and divided the resources of the constitutional Socialists. The revolutionary Socialism founded by Rosa Luxemburg during the last years of peace urged a return to the principles of the Communist Manifesto of 1847, and denounced the co-operation with the bourgeoisie preached by the Revisionists.[1] While Bernstein maintained that the profits of capital are at any rate partially secured by the community, and Hilferding that they could be absorbed at home, Rosa Luxemburg, in the bible of contemporary Communism, *The Accumulation of Capital: a Contribution to the Economic Explanation of Imperialism*, published in 1913, argued that surplus values inevitably seek outlets abroad, and therefore lead straight to war. The accumulation of capital was as dangerous as the storing of gunpowder, and an explosion could only be forestalled by the forcible overthrow of the capitalist order of society.

The military conflict broke out before the social change could be effected, and Rosa Luxemburg spent three out of the four years in prison. Her bitter reflections were embodied in a pamphlet entitled *The Crisis in German Social Democracy*. "Capitalist society stands shamed, wading in blood and filth. And in the midst of this orgy a world tragedy has occurred—the capitulation of Socialism. Marx gave the working-class a compass in its journey towards an unchanging goal, and German Socialism was in the van." The support of the war had killed International Socialism ; yet from the conflict would arise the solidarity of the proletariat with new intensity. "The war is the struggle of a fully developed capitalism for the ex-

[1] See her *Briefe an Karl und Luise Kautsky*.

ploitation of the last remnant of non-capitalistic zones. This madness will not end till the workers wake from their drunken sleep, clasp each other's hands in brotherhood, denouncing the bestial chorus of war-mongers and the hoarse cry of capitalist hyenas with the mighty voice of Labour : Proletarians of all countries, unite ! "

The political Revolution of November 1918 merely cleared the stage for the radical transformation on which she had set her heart. The Communist Party was founded with the *Rote Fahne* as its organ, and a programme of action was proclaimed by " Red Rosa " at the first Communist Congress held at Berlin in December. " Every ruling class has fought to the very end for its privileges with the most stubborn energy. The class of capitalist Imperialists exceeds all its predecessors in undisguised cynicism, brutality, and meanness. It will rouse heaven and hell against the proletariat. It will mobilise the peasantry against the towns, the backward elements of the working-class against the Socialist advance-guard. All this resistance must be overcome with an iron hand. Against the threatening danger of the counter-revolution must come the arming of the workers and the disarming of the ruling class. The fight for Socialism is the most gigantic civil war in history, and the proletarian Revolution must make the necessary preparations for the struggle. This defence of the compact masses of the workers, this arming of them with full political power for the accomplishment of the Revolution, is what is known as the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Not there, where the wage-slave sits by the side of the capitalist, the agricultural labourer by the Junker, in the light of a false equality : but there, where a million workers seize the whole authority of the State with their horny hands, in order to bring that authority down like Thor's hammer on the heads of the ruling classes—there alone is the true Democracy."

The author of this flaming manifesto fell a victim to the "second revolution," which she had striven only

too successfully to provoke. Her last words in the *Rote Fahne* expressed her conviction that the failure of the Spartakist rising of January 1919 was only a momentary check. "Order reigns in Berlin! You senseless Thugs! Your order is built on sand. The Revolution will rise again to-morrow, and will sound forth the trumpet-call, I was, I am, I am to be!" Subsequent outbreaks at Berlin and Munich were suppressed by Noske, and the second Communist Congress was held in the autumn of 1919 in a forest near Heidelberg to escape the attentions of spies. The decision to recognise and utilise both Parliament and the Trade Unions led to the severance of a small body of intransigents, who formed the "Communist Labour Party"; but this defection was made good by the accession of the left wing of the Independents under the leadership of Däumig, who split their party at the Halle Congress in the autumn of 1920. The movement continued to grow, and the first Congress of the United Communist Party, held in December 1920, spoke for half a million members affiliated to the Third International. Their numbers were greatest in the industrial districts of Prussian Saxony, where a trial of strength took place in March 1921. The Prussian Government, mindful of the nemesis of Noske, avoided the employment of the Reichswehr, and suppressed the revolt with the Schutzpolizei after hard fighting; but the snake was scotched, not killed.

Despite the failure in Prussian Saxony the number of paying members of the Communist Party steadily increased, and Socialist Governments in Thuringia and Saxony were compelled to rely on Communist support. The formation of a Socialist-Communist coalition in Saxony in 1923 provoked the intervention of the Reichswehr; but the economic chaos resulting from the invasion of the Ruhr played into the hands of the Extreme Left no less than of the Extreme Right. Though the Majority Socialists and the Independents were at last reunited at the Nuremberg Congress in

September 1922, the Communists polled three million votes at the election of May 1924, and returned sixty-two members to the third Reichstag of the Republic. Their political influence, however, was not commensurate with their numbers, for they possessed no celebrities except Clara Zetkin, and their conduct in Parliament was generally resented. The flood-tide soon began to recede, and in the election of December 1924 their numbers fell to forty-five, while the Socialists rose from a hundred to a hundred and thirty-one. The record of the Bolshevists was little calculated to win recruits for their *protégés*, and the fortunes of Communism in Germany seem likely to rise and fall with the ebb and flow of national prosperity. The emergence of the Communist Party is none the less the main event in the annals of Labour since the conclusion of the war, as the concentration of economic power is the most striking event in the history of capital.

It was not in Labour circles alone that brains were busy with schemes of change. While Stinnes accepted the existing economic order and all its implications without question, Walther Rathenau busied himself with dreams of a new social order.[1] The two most conspicuous figures on the stage of German capitalism disliked and distrusted one another as much as if they belonged to different nations or different epochs. Stinnes, the man of business, possessed a single-track mind, with a piercing glance over a limited field. Rathenau, the philosopher, took all knowledge for his province, and surveyed the problems of the age from a lofty watch-tower. If Stinnes appeared to his rival in the light of a materialist, Rathenau might well seem to his critic a wordy doctrinaire. Yet Rathenau had nothing of the ineffectiveness which Imperial Germany used to associate with scholars and thinkers. If he had less talent for money-making than Stinnes, he was none the less head of the A.E.G. and an active partner

[1] See his *Gesammelte Schriften*, 5 vols., and *Reden*. Cp. Gaston Raphael, *Walther Rathenau*.

in other enterprises, while in the realm of high politics he took his place without an effort. In breadth of vision, range of culture, and many-sided achievement he stood alone among the public men of the Fatherland. Nobody rendered greater service in the hour of need, first as Minister of Reconstruction and then at the Foreign Office, than the scholar-statesman who fell a victim to the bullet of cowardly anti-Semite assassins in June 1922.

Rathenau, like Stinnes, inherited a name and a career. But whereas the latter was content to walk in the path which had been traced for him, the former was attracted to art, literature, philosophy, science, economics, and sociology. He studied in Germany, Switzerland, and France, spoke French, English, and Italian, and chose his friends among artists and writers, such as Liebermann and Hauptmann. His variety of interests, however, in no way diminished his zeal for the fortunes of the mighty enterprise which his father had built up. His seat on the Board of the A.E.G. was no sinecure, and he was personally responsible for extensions in Russia and France. His discoveries in chemistry and electrolysis led to the establishment of independent works under his control, and he was industrial director of a large bank. He increased his knowledge of the world by crossing the Atlantic and by accompanying Dernburg on his official visit to Africa. During these crowded years of study, business, and travel he was maturing the social gospel which he was to proclaim in the long series of writings and addresses during the last decade of his life.

His first book, *Zur Kritik der Zeit*, published in 1912, was not merely, as its title implied, a criticism of the time, but a programme of change. The marks of the age, he declared, were intellectualism in the sphere of thought and mechanisation in the sphere of society; yet their very triumph had already called into being forces destined to challenge their sway. The theme is pursued in a volume, *Zur Mechanik des Geistes*, pub-

lished in the following year, dedicated " To the younger generation," and revealing, like its predecessor, the influence of James and Bergson. The boundless confidence in the intellect, he declares, is misplaced, and the soul must escape from its domination. A fuller revelation of his thought was begun on the eve of the war, interrupted by his work as first director of the Raw Materials Department, and published in 1917. *In Days to Come* can hardly be described as a war book, but it is assuredly one of the most interesting works written during the conflict, and it has enjoyed a larger circulation than any of his other writings.[1] Casting his net wider than before, he surveys the future of society and analyses the spiritual foundations on which it should rest. His goal is the abolition of " the proletarian condition " by the revision of the laws on property and education ; above all, by strict limitation of the right of inheritance. *The New Economics*, published in 1918, argued that industry and commerce could no longer be regarded as a private affair, but must be co-ordinated in a great trust working under a State charter, and focussing all the resources of science on production. The new economic order, he added, would lead to the new social order, which every combatant in the great struggle cherished in his heart.

On the conclusion of the war Rathenau published a subtle portrait of the Kaiser and an incisive analysis of the Revolution.[2] " There is no longer any doubt," he writes in June 1919, " that what we call the German Revolution is a disappointment. Every windfall, every product of despair, involves disillusion. Our chains were not broken but fell off. There was no preparation, no revolutionary theory. Only a second revolution can save us, the revolution of sentiment." The movement of 1919, he added, was motived by rancour, " which is unworthy of us " ; by a demand for pros-

[1] A translation of *Von Kommenden Dingen.*

[2] *Kritik der dreifachen Revolution.* Not included in the Collected Works.

perity through the equalisation of property, which was an illusion ; and by a desire for responsibility, which was the most honourable and fruitful of its aspects. To this searching analysis of the Revolution the author appended an *Apologia*, replying to various criticisms. No unofficial personage, he complained, was the object of so many attacks and so much discussion ; and he met his accusers by recalling the incidents and activities of his busy life.

Rathenau's main energies after the war were devoted to the task of modernising the State and society. His speeches at meetings of the Democratic Party, of which he was a member, are marked by unusual breadth and imagination. " We have not won our liberties," he reminded his audience ; " they have fallen into our laps." Yet he never doubted that the Revolution had inaugurated a new era, and that the old regime had disappeared for ever. The social epoch had begun. " A reactionary current is flowing through Germany," he declared after the election of May 1920 ; " it is strong in its momentary influence, but in lasting results a mere breath of wind." New Germany must think no less than work. " Our political programme is almost fulfilled," he argued at the end of the same year, " but the great field of economics has not been approached by any of the parties. We shall neither return to the old system nor shall we follow the lead of Marx. None of us believe that we shall be saved by armies or diplomats. The fortunes of the nation will, in the long run, be determined not by armies but by the people themselves, in accordance with the ideas which they adopt. The Treaty of Versailles will disappear, for it is built solely on hate, and nothing will live unless it embodies an idea."

Rathenau explained his philosophy in frequent public addresses and in the books which continued to flow from his facile pen. " It is no longer a question of the slogan of socialisation, which nobody understands," he declared to a meeting of Civil Servants, " but of a

precise plan of an organisation of our economy on a social basis." National control of industry, not national ownership, was the middle term between the rival cries of individualism and socialism. "We feel that the epoch of pure capitalism is ended," he announced in 1921 in a lecture at the new *Hochschule für Politik* at Berlin; "yet no authoritative voice demands a fundamental transformation of the economic and social order." Capitalism produced—and alone could have produced—food, clothing, houses, transport, and other requirements for a vastly increased population, and an even greater output was needed. "No good or even tolerable standard of life can be attained unless our production can be increased." Yet in supplying these needs it had gained too much power over the life of the community, and secured a disproportionate share of the rewards. No single class should be permitted to rule. Co-operation was the watchword in politics and economics. For Liberty, Equality, Fraternity should be substituted Liberty, Responsibility, Solidarity.

The New Society, published in 1921, contains the maturest statement of Rathenau's social and political gospel.[1] He agrees with the Socialists that society must be "socialised," and that every one must earn his living. "But the goal is not any division of property or equality of reward. It is the abolition of the proletarian condition, of life-long and hereditary servitude, of the two-fold stratification of society, of the scandalous enslavement of brother by brother which vitiates all our acts, all our creations, all our joys. Nor is this the final goal. The final object of all endeavour is the development of the human soul." Of socialism in the economic sense there is no need. "The Socialists envisage a future where there are no more rich, and they imagine that as a result there would be no more poor. They are the slaves of parrot-phrases. Logical socialism means the proletarian con-

[1] Translation of *Die Neue Gesellschaft.*

dition for us all. We must achieve a genuine democratisation of the State and of education. Only then will the monopoly of class and culture be overthrown. The cessation of the unearned income will register the downfall of the last of the class-monopolies, that of the plutocracy." In the scheme of salvation there is no place for the parasite.

The vicissitudes through which industry passed during the first years of peace claimed public attention far more closely and continuously than those of agriculture ; yet the country, like the town, has experienced both the smiles and frowns of fortune. While the mark was rushing headlong downhill and no one knew what the morrow would bring forth, the tillers of the soil might well seem to be the sole element of fixity in the economic kaleidoscope. For a year or two after the war the food-grower was master of the situation, and while the Left held the reins of government the Junkers and peasants filled their bellies and their pockets. Mortgages were paid off without an effort in depreciated currency, and soaring prices enabled them to improve their property. The peasant shared in the benefits of high prices, which were kept up by limiting the area of cultivation and feeding milk and cereals to the animals. Though the duties on imported food were suspended during the war and were not reimposed after its conclusion, the fall of the mark sheltered the agriculturist from the keen wind of foreign competition, and it was in vain that the Government endeavoured to save town-dwellers from their exactions. When, after the termination of food control in 1921, a levy of one-tenth of the harvest was imposed at a lower price, the Landbund, representing the peasants as well as the Junkers, retaliated by raising the remaining nine-tenths above world prices. The experiment injured the consumer instead of aiding him, and the levy was dropped in the following year ; but the price of wheat remained well above world prices. The sun, however, was not to shine for ever on the broad expanse of East-

elbia. The inflation which gave the farmers control of the home market lost its value when the invasion of the Ruhr killed the paper mark and rendered stabilisation an urgent necessity. With the appearance of the Rentenmark in the autumn of 1923 the reign of the food kings was over. World prices began to rule, credit was only to be had on usurious terms, and the cry for agricultural protection once more resounded throughout the land.

The agricultural labourer took no part in the Revolution, for he was unused to political activity and lived far from the stage where the future of the Fatherland was decided. There could be no doubt, however, as to where his sympathies lay, for among the first acts of the Provisional Government were the abolition of the detestable Servants' Ordinance, that strange survival from the feudal ages, and the grant of universal suffrage in Prussia. On 24th January 1919 new regulations were issued, allowing the labourer to make wage contracts like the town workers, and fixing the working day at eight hours for the four winter months, ten for spring and autumn, and eleven for the four months of summer. These changes, however, did little to alter the social system of the countryside, and the efforts of the labourers themselves bore scanty fruit. The foundation of an Agricultural Workers' Union suggested that they were about to play their part in the working-class movement ; but the Junkers ignored the Union and reserved the right to make separate agreements with the Workers' section of the Landbund. Protest strikes in the winter of 1919–20 were condemned by the Socialists on the ground that agriculture was a vital industry, and the Government arrested the strikers. By the spring of 1920 the East Elbian farm labourer, though free in law, was in practice again under the Junker yoke. At this moment, however, the Kapp Putsch unchained fiercer passions. The reaction was defeated by the serried ranks of the urban worker ; but farm labourers, especially in

Prussian Saxony and Mecklenburg, joined in the fray, in some cases locking the Junker into his house and forming Red Guards for the locality. Once again, however, the Majority Socialists and Trade Unions, sworn foes of revolutionary violence, insisted on the abolition of the Labourers' Councils, some of which defied orders and were roughly handled by Government troops. Henceforth the Landbund reigned supreme.

The innate conservatism of the Majority Socialists was revealed not only by their opposition to the rising of the farm labourers, but in their attitude to the rural problem as a whole. The agricultural specialist of the party, Eduard David, had embodied his ideas in a massive treatise on *Socialism and Agriculture*, first published in the opening years of the century and revised in 1922. Agriculture, he contends, is an industry of such unique character that the Socialist arguments against private ownership do not apply. The more owners, indeed, the better. The power of the Junkers must be broken, not by land nationalisation but by the multiplication of peasant proprietors, whose lack of working capital can be made good by co-operation. No individualist is more convinced of "the magic of property" than David, who argues that small farms produce as much food per acre as large estates. The rival proposal of Karl Ballod to cultivate the soil by thousands of large nationalised farms might produce, as he believes, a vastly increased output, but constitutes too great a break with the past to have any chance of execution.[1]

In the political world democracy triumphed over autocracy, but in the economic field capital triumphed over labour. Yet though the capitalist organisation of society remained unimpaired, the working-classes did not go empty away. The Decree of 23rd November 1918, recognising the principle of an eight-hours' day, was a real boon to men who had worked considerably

[1] Ballod, *Der Zukunftsstaat*, 2nd ed., 1919.

longer than their comrades in Great Britain or the United States. The declaration of the principle was repeated in the Constitution; but though it has never been embodied in an Act, and has occasionally been threatened by the Right, there seems to be little danger of it being overthrown. For the men have shown themselves ready for special agreements to meet temporary emergencies, such as the occupation of the Ruhr. On two occasions Bills have been drafted to place the question on a precise legal footing, but the difficulty of agreement on the exceptions to the principle proved insurmountable.

The second enduring economic advantage secured by the working-classes is the extension of the principle of industrial representation. The *Betriebsräte*, or Factory Councils, are not the offspring of Bolshevism but the heirs of the old regime.[1] Urban labour was granted the right of association in 1869, and an Act of 1891 provided for the formation of Workers' Committees to assist in the execution of the works regulations. Since the formation of Committees was optional, and there was no obligation on the employer to accept their advice, their influence was small. A further advance was registered by the Prussian Mines Act of 1905, which made Workers' Committees compulsory in mines employing over one hundred men, and empowered them to formulate requests, to supervise the execution of the works regulations, and to facilitate the operation of "welfare" institutions. In Germany, as elsewhere, the war raised the status of Labour. The Auxiliary Service Act of 1916 made Workers' Committees obligatory for every industrial undertaking employing more than fifty workers, and created mixed arbitration boards to settle disputes.

The Revolution still further enhanced the prestige of Labour, and among the great industrialists were men who were too shrewd to wait for concessions to be

[1] The best account is by Marcel Berthelot, *Works Councils in Germany:* International Labour Office, Geneva, 1924.

extracted from them by force. On 15th November 1918, when the Revolution was only a week old, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* or Joint Industrial Association was formed by prominent representatives of Capital and Labour. The agreement, which was approved by the Provisional Government, recognised the Trade Unions as the authorised representatives of the workers, and approved the creation of joint bodies for districts and for the whole country to regulate questions affecting labour. Participation in works management, which already prevailed in many factories, now became the rule. The agreement was signed by Stinnes and two other industrial magnates on the one side, by Legien, the head of the Socialist Trade Unions, and by representatives of the "Christian" and Hirsch-Duncker Unions on the other. It was a triumph for the Trade Unions, who at last secured recognition of the principle of collective labour agreements, and it was generally welcomed as a good omen of peaceful economic advance.

While Capital and Labour were thus planning co-operation by means of Factory Committees, the Independent Socialists and Spartakists were setting up Workers' and Soldiers' Councils; but whereas the object of the former was to foster harmonious relations between employers and employed, the aim of the latter was to rule the country. Legien described the new Councils as superfluous, and the Provisional Government, Socialist though it was, had no love for a movement which challenged its authority and indeed its existence. It was the desire of the Coalition Government, which took office on the election of the National Assembly, to make no reference in the Constitution to the *Räte*; but a strike in Berlin compelled Ministers to compromise. On 4th March it was agreed that the Workers' Councils should be recognised as legal institutions and should appear in the Constitution; that the joint industrial associations should control production; that the workers should co-operate on an equal footing in the regulation of the conditions of

labour ; and that District Workers' Councils and a Federal Labour Council should be created. The plan of Chambers of Labour was approved at the second Congress of Workers' Councils held at Berlin in April. Though the demand for the nationalisation of industry was slackening, the idea of joint control of factories was in the ascendant, and the powers of the Workers' Committees (not to be confounded with the *Räte* or Workers' Councils) in the mines and other industries were extended.

Meanwhile the principle of joint control had been inserted in the Constitution, and nobody could complain that Article 165 neglected the right of the worker to make his voice heard. Works Councils, District Councils, and a Federal Council were to be manned exclusively by Labour, which was also to be represented on mixed District Councils and a Federal Economic Council. It was an opulent programme, and in the six years which have elapsed since its enunciation only two of the items have been carried out—the Works Council and the Federal Economic Council. A Works Councils Bill had been drafted in May 1919 and submitted to employers and Trade Unions, and the first reading of the revised scheme took place in August, a few days after the Constitution came into force. Building on the well-tried experiment of Workers' Committees, its aim was to substitute autocracy for democracy in the factories ; but while the workers received a share of power in all matters directly concerning themselves, the actual management of the business remained in the hands of the employers. Though the Bill merely recognised and extended a system already existing in many industries, it was sharply attacked by spokesmen of the employers, and when it emerged from Committee at the end of the year the powers of the Councils had been whittled down. The amended Bill was briefly discussed by the National Assembly, passed by 213 to 64, and came into operation on 4th February 1920. *The Betriebsräte-*

gesetz, or Works Councils Act, like the Weimar Constitution, was a compromise ; yet the former embodied the principle of partnership as clearly as the latter the principle of democracy.

The Act provides that a Works Council shall be instituted in every public and private business employing at least twenty persons. The Council is to consist of a minimum of three for a total of fifty workers, and of a maximum of thirty in a large enterprise. The members are to be chosen by ballot by their comrades over eighteen years of age ; but candidates for election must be twenty-four years old and have been employed in the business for at least six months. Members are elected for one year, but are eligible for re-election. The Council is to elect a chairman, who represents it in dealing with the employer and before the Conciliation Board. The employer attends when he is invited or when a meeting is called at his request. The decisions of the Council may not override collective agreements reached by the Trade Unions, whose superior position in the hierarchy of Labour is assumed throughout. If there is no collective agreement in existence, the Council is to discuss with the Trade Union what changes should be recommended in the condition of labour. The Council must assist by advice in securing the maximum output ; co-operate in the introduction of new methods of work ; safeguard the business against disturbances, or appeal to the Conciliation Board if agreement proves impossible ; determine or amend, in agreement with the employer, the conditions of labour ; endeavour to remove causes of complaint by negotiation with the employer ; participate in the prevention of accidents, the supervision of health conditions, the administration of pension funds, and all questions concerning the welfare of the workers. The employer may choose his staff as he pleases, though subject to the general principle that engagement of a worker must be without reference to his convictions or to his political, military, religious, or trade activities.

In questions of dismissal, on the other hand, the Council may negotiate with the employer and appeal to the Conciliation Board. This elaborate Charter of 106 clauses has been completed by a series of Acts and Decrees necessitated by experience of its operation.

The Works Councils Act, the most notable of the legislative achievements of the German Republic, pleased neither the Left wing of Labour, which denounced all co-operation with Capital, nor the Conservative employer, who resented interference with his business. Yet it has, on the whole, proved a valuable addition to the economic organisation of the Reich. The working of the measure naturally depends for its success on the tact and goodwill of both sides, which cannot be guaranteed by law. The Trade Unions have played an active part in making the machinery work, and, indeed, it may be said that the Works Councils have come into being under their auspices. At times the Communist element has endangered the experiment, but on the whole the working-classes have loyally supported the system. The attitude of the employers differs with individual temperament and circumstance. The fear that the management of their businesses would be taken out of their hands has vanished, and in many cases they recognise the practical convenience of the system. The obligation to show balance-sheets is resented in some quarters; but balance-sheets can be presented in a form which hides almost as much as it reveals, and business secrets need not be communicated. While in no way detrimental to the interests of the employers, the Works Councils have proved of undoubted benefit to Labour. Their greatest value lies in the protection against arbitrary dismissal and in the region of social welfare. Wages and hours, the most controversial of problems, fall as a rule within the province of the Trade Unions.

Whatever unfriendly critics may say of the faults of the Constitution and the follies of the Reichstag, it is generally agreed that the Federal Economic Council

has proved a success.[1] Since the creation of the district bodies envisaged in Article 165 would require a considerable time, it was resolved to create a Provisional Council. After the careful discussion of rival schemes, a decree of May 1920 created the *Reichswirthschaftsrat*, which held its first meeting at the end of June. Its members numbered 326, and represented every aspect of the economic life of the country. Agriculture and industry, the two chief pillars, were represented by 68 each ; commerce, banking, and insurance by 44 ; handicraft by 36 ; transport by 34 ; and smaller occupations in proportion to their importance. Consumers were represented by 30, while a sprinkling of officials, professional men, and economic experts was introduced to ensure the consideration of problems and projects from an independent point of view. The methods of selection vary widely, so that every interest may be included. Except for a few nominees of the Federal Government and the Reichsrat, all the members are chosen by functional associations, and the Assembly forms a mirror of the economic life of the nation.

The Council, which contained such outstanding personalities as Rathenau, Stinnes, Cuno, Wissell, Legien, was admirably adapted to its work. Both in its criticisms on social and financial measures submitted for its consideration and in projects elaborated by itself, it has been of the greatest assistance to Ministers. Voting is by groups as well as by heads, and an outvoted group or minority can notify its views to the Government. Article 5 of the Decree creating the Council instructs the members to regard themselves as " representative of the economic interests of the whole nation," and informed them that they were " subject to their own conscience and not bound by mandates." The debates have been carried on in the desired spirit of detachment from local, party, and confessional strife. Every point is thoroughly discussed, and experts may

[1] See Finer, *Representative Government and a Parliament of Industry*.

be called in to help. So successful has been the Provisional Council that the definitive body, if and when it is created, is not likely to differ very widely from the existing Assembly. Friction with the Reichstag, which some of its members also adorn, is eliminated at the outset by the fact that it is purely advisory ; and the conflict between the advocates of territorial and functional representation is brought to a sensible termination by the adoption of the former principle for the supreme political assembly and of the latter for its economic satellite.

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CHAPTER XIV

YOUNG GERMANY

THE Revolution, which swept away so many familiar landmarks, could not fail to leave its impress on the theory and practice of education, and for a time confusion reigned in the schools. The Imperial Constitution left complete independence to the Federal States, and during the distracted winter of 1918–9 men climbed into power resolved to carry out their pet schemes of destruction and reconstruction. The most sensational experiment was made in Prussia, where Adolf Hoffmann, one of the little band of Independent Socialist members of the Landtag who had followed Liebknecht, suddenly found himself to his surprise Minister of Education.[1] A more grotesque appointment could not have been conceived than this ignorant fanatic, who signalised his accession to office by a violent anti-clerical campaign. The "Hoffmann Decrees" of 29th November 1918 vetoed school prayers and religious instruction, and removed religion from the list of subjects of examination. His reign was brief, and the decrees were cancelled in the following spring. His successor, Hänisch, a Socialist of very different type, who ruled for more than two years, found the enemy of childhood not in religion but in the spirit of war; and the decrees of the pacifist Minister inculcated the teaching of reconciliation, the reference of disputes to arbitration, the revision of text-books, and the winnowing of school-libraries. Where Socialism was strong, as in Prussia and Saxony, the break with the past was further emphasised by the removal of pictures of the Hohenzollerns from the walls of the schoolroom.

During the first half of 1919 all Germany was waiting for the Constitution. The pundits of Weimar, who were governed by the two principles of democracy and

[1] See Roman, *The New Education in Europe*, parts iii. and iv. For a sketch of Hoffmann, see Fischart, *Das alte und das neue Deutschland*.

centralisation, proceeded to assert the claim of the Reich to a deciding voice in the vital question of the education of its citizens. No part of the Constitution is of more interest than Article 148. "In every school the educational aims must be moral training, public spirit, personal and vocational fitness, and, above all, the cultivation of German national character and of the spirit of international reconciliation." The concluding words, suggested by Dr. Beyerle, a Bavarian member, were opposed by the chauvinist Pastor Traub, who was later to figure in the Kapp Putsch, but found widespread support on the Left. "We women and mothers," cried a Socialist deputy, "are most anxious for this word to find a place in the Constitution. We wish the reconciliation of the peoples to be introduced into the school." The suggestion of the Committee was confirmed in full Assembly, and a sharp challenge was thrown down to the spirit of exclusive nationalism which had dominated the educational system of Germany before the war.

Next in importance among the innovations of the Weimar Constitution was the decision that children of all classes must go to school. It had always been the legal duty of middle- and upper-class parents to provide their children with an education not inferior to that of the public elementary school, and it was the task of inspectors to see that their responsibility was fulfilled. The bourgeois privilege of educating children at home or at a private school now disappeared. "Private preparatory schools are to be abolished. School attendance is compulsory in principle at a public elementary school for eight years, and thereafter at a continuation school up to the completion of the eighteenth year. A first elementary school common to all is to serve as the foundation of secondary and higher education." While in the elementary school all are taught the same subjects, the continuation schools are specialised. In both grades education is free, and indeed the promising child is offered a chance

by the German Republic that he never possessed before. "In order to enable children of people of smaller means to attend secondary and higher schools, money is to be provided by the Reich, the States, and the local authorities, especially for grants to children considered suitable for training in secondary and higher schools, till their education is completed." A federal law enacted in the following year reduced the compulsory attendance at the elementary school to four years, after which it was to be decided whether the child should remain there or go to a secondary or higher school. In the vexed question of religious instruction the Constitution pursues a middle path between the compulsion of the Imperial era and the secularisation advocated by the Socialists. Religion remains a regular subject; but no teacher is obliged to give the instruction, and the parents decide whether the child is to receive it. There is, however, still room for sectarian schools where there are a sufficient number of children attached to a minority religious denomination or "world-philosophy" (*Weltanschauung*). Throughout the educational articles of the Constitution we find a praiseworthy desire to provide equality of opportunity for children of all classes and creeds, and to rear a generation of cultivated, broad-minded, and efficient citizens of the Republic.

The apprehensions entertained in Conservative circles that the lofty standards inherited from the Empire would be lowered proved to be unfounded. After a few months of uncertainty and tension scholars and teachers settled down, and the traditional virtues of regular attendance, discipline, and hard work reasserted themselves. The interest of the public authorities was fully maintained, and closer contact between parents and school was secured by Parents' Councils. Religious instruction was universal in the country, though not in the towns. Yet the teaching profession, while maintaining its prestige, was confronted by formidable difficulties. Salaries were low,

and the antics of the mark rendered their purchasing value uncertain. Many of the children were underfed, stunted, and tuberculous, and every school contained pathetic little figures who arrived without breakfast, and were unable to profit by the instruction they received. At times it was impossible to heat the rooms owing to want of fuel or lack of cash. In the area of the Allied occupation overcrowding was often added to other difficulties. With these and similar problems the teachers grappled manfully, fortified by a conviction of the supreme importance of their work. The share of Humboldt and Fichte in the rebuilding of Prussia a century before was a familiar theme, and the large majority believed that the Republic must find compensation for the loss of material power by enhancing the worth of the individual citizen. For while the professors remained for the most part monarchist and nationalist by sentiment, the elementary teachers were predominantly republican, and by no means insensible either to the international appeal or to the claims of a rational individualism. Nowhere was the reaction against machine-made goods more strikingly illustrated than in the Fellowship or Community Schools organised in Hamburg by Councillor Paulsen for children of twelve to fourteen, in which examinations were unknown, and where everything was left to the initiative of parents, masters, and pupils.

Though the Constitution supplied an educational framework, the States were entitled and indeed compelled to fill in the details, and there were differences in the pace and temper with which they carried out their marching orders. By the end of 1919 most of the Federal units had brought their machinery up to date. "The spirit of national reconciliation" recommended by Article 148 was not viewed with much approval beyond the Elbe or in Bavaria, and the Reich possessed no means of enforcing its will; but in some cases the States loyally obeyed the letter and

spirit of the Constitution. The Government of Brunswick, for instance, issued a code, exhorting the teacher of history to emphasise the progress of civilisation, to relegate wars to the background, and to exhibit bloody struggles as signs of degeneration. Rejecting the crudities of pseudo-Darwinism, he was to explain to his pupils that co-operation, rather than the struggle for existence, was the law of animal and human societies, and that every nation was a member of the human family. The teaching of languages was to provide the occasion of describing the customs and ideas of other peoples with a view to a sympathetic understanding.

Despite such gallant endeavours to waft international breezes into the stuffy classroom, the teacher was handicapped by the lack of satisfactory text-books.[1] Time was required for the composition of suitable works, and the professors who, as a rule, supplied the necessities of the elementary and secondary schools were for the most part disciples of the old rather than the new regime. Many of the school-books written since the war, in Germany as in France, present a wholly one-sided and propagandist view of the causes and events of the catastrophe; and the revival of nationalism, under the spur of the invasion of the Ruhr, focussed the mind of the country on thoughts of conflict rather than co-operation. These unfavourable circumstances, however, have not deterred liberal-minded educationalists from attempting to realise the ideal set forth by the Constitution. The *Bund der entscheidener Schulreformer* (Society of Radical School Reformers), under the presidency of Professor Paul Oestreich, is busily at work in the good cause; and Dr. Siegfried Kawerau, one of its leading members, has published a scholarly volume of Synoptic Tables from the end of the Middle Ages which, in his own words, does better justice to the spirit of the Republic and

[1] See *Enquête sur les livres scholaires d'après-guerre.* Dotation Carnegie, 1923.

democracy than the manuals which it is destined to supersede.

The Republic has manfully endeavoured to preserve and develop the middle and higher, no less than the lower, organs of national education. No important changes have been introduced into the secondary schools, where classics still hold their ground. The demand for higher education is greater than ever, since women in increasing numbers claim an equal right to study, elementary teachers aspire to a university career, and the working-classes clamour for assistance to climb the ladder of learning. While integration is the governing principle at the bottom, and rich and poor attend the common school, differentiation is the watchword at the top. New universities have been founded at Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Cologne; but the university has long ceased to be the sole representative of higher education. The Technische Hochschulen are State institutions of university rank, and their portals, like those of their elder sisters, can only be entered after passing the *Abiturientenexamen*. Among their subjects are architecture, engineering, chemistry, mining, forestry, shipbuilding; but provision is also made for continuing general education by courses in science and mathematics, literature and languages, economics and history. In the humanities the universities remain supreme; but no student need emerge from his four years at a Technische Hochschule with the dwarfing disabilities of the pure specialist. Inferior in academic status, but playing a useful part in the life of the country, is the Handels-Hochschule for young business men who desire to master a particular branch of knowledge. While the University and the Technische Hochschule are the children of the State, the Handels-Hochschulen have been created by the great cities to supply their own urgent needs. Cologne led the way in 1901, and its example was followed by Berlin, Mannheim, Munich, Königsberg, Nuremberg. The first has become a faculty of the

new University of Cologne, as the Frankfurt Academy for Social and Commercial Sciences, founded in 1901, has been merged in the young university. Surveying the situation as a whole, we may hazard the opinion that Germany retains her position as the best educated people in Europe.

Though the interest of the State and the zeal of the nation are undiminished, and the *Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft*, founded in 1920, has brought welcome aid, the university has been one of the principal victims of the prolonged economic distress. Access to university life has never demanded a long purse; but the ruin of scores of thousands of middle-class families by the depreciation of the mark has made it impossible in numberless cases to afford even the most modest sum for the education of their children. To meet the emergency, the first co-operative association was founded at Dresden in 1919 by soldier-students with their field-kitchen and sacks of rice and flour; and the *Wirthschaftshilfe der deutschen Studentenschaft* was founded in 1921, with Dr. Schairer as chairman, to collect money, to co-ordinate local effort, and to represent the economic interests of the students in dealing with the State and industrial organisations. Though valuable aid has been received not only from the German public but from sympathisers and university students in other countries, the main characteristic of the organisation is self-help. At every university a *Wirthschaftskörper*, or group of students, in co-operation with professors and business men, started dining-rooms, hostels, workshops, co-operative stores, labour exchanges, infirmaries, lending-libraries, laundries, barbers' shops, and whatever other machinery was required. By the agency of the co-operative kitchens, which are run at cost price, and by living mainly on vegetables, many thousands have been enabled to pursue and complete their studies.

In the worst years of the currency chaos the majority of students were compelled to eke out their resources

by manual labour. The original idea of combining outside employment with study during the term involved a burden which few of the well-nourished, and still fewer of the under-nourished, were strong enough to bear ; and the aim of the organisation has been to secure work for its members during the long summer vacation in fields, factories, or mines. For a year or two, when unemployment was almost unknown, it was possible not only to find work but to save half the wages earned ; but when in 1923 stabilisation raised home prices and temporarily dislocated the export trade, it was difficult to save at all unless the work-student lived at home or as a guest of friends or relatives. Under these circumstances an important part is played by the loan-fund, to which every member of the organisation is expected to contribute, and from which sums are advanced for the last two semesters, when he needs all his time and strength to prepare for the final examination. There is no more admirable chapter in the story of the bourgeoisie during the years of economic chaos than that which tells of the work-student and of the self-help organisation which has enabled him to overcome what might well have appeared to be insurmountable obstacles.

The thirst for knowledge is felt by an increasing number of young men and women of the working classes, who are unable to climb the higher rungs of the educational ladder. The movement for adult education in Germany began in 1871 with the foundation of the *Gesellschaft zur Verbreitung von Volksbildung*.[1] The State had granted manhood suffrage for the Reichstag, and it desired to prepare the elector for his new responsibilities by popular lectures and public libraries. A mass of useful and interesting information was thus imparted at institutions, of which the Humboldt Academy in Berlin was the best known ; but it

[1] See *Bulletins* 1 and 17 of the World Association for Adult Education ; and Dr. Werner Picht, "Adult Education in Germany," *Contemporary Review*, February 1924.

was not always assimilated, and the learner had to content himself with the passive rôle of a listener. It was not till the end of the World War that provision was made for teaching as distinct from lecturing, and for the co-operation of the student through the medium of the tutorial class. The Revolution brought the people to power and emphasised the necessity for a deeper culture, while the eight hours' day opportunely increased the time available for its pursuit. In the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, the equivalent of the Workers' Educational Association, the teacher descended from his platform, mingled with his students, and compelled them to think, ask, and answer questions. While in England classes are organised from a university, the tutorial class in Germany is arranged by the Volkshochschulen, which have been founded in nearly all the large towns. These People's Universities, which are in part controlled by the teachers and students themselves, provide a wide variety of evening classes for young men and women above eighteen. The favourite subjects are economics, history, and political science. People's High Schools, or residential colleges, which have played such a beneficent part in the adult educational movement in Denmark, were inaugurated in Schleswig-Holstein in 1905, and have been adopted in a few cases in other parts of the country ; but they have not taken root in a community which is predominantly industrial, and where the worker cannot afford to leave his employment for a period of several months. There is an echo of Ruskin College in the Frankfurt Academy of Labour, where young workers spend two semesters and prepare themselves to become teachers and guides of their less favoured comrades.

The Volkshochschule is generally encouraged by the States, though each federal unit determines the extent of its patronage. Prussia led the van with a decree issued in February 1919 by the enlightened Hänisch. "The Ministry of Education wishes to serve the

Volkshochschulen ; but they do not wish to be, and they ought not to be, governed by the State. Yet the State will and should consider their promotion as one of its essential duties. The Ministry will therefore open the doors of all public school buildings, universities, etc., so far as it is possible without disturbing the ordinary work." Subsequent decrees defined the nature and purposes of the Volkshochschule. " Lectures must be followed by discussions, which should pave the way for the essential basis of all work, namely, personal contact and closer relationship among all concerned. Herein the Volkshochschule represents an *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* in which hand-workers and academically trained workers unite. The danger of disseminating worthless and even pernicious half-knowledge must be scrupulously avoided. It is not a continuation school, nor a vocational school, nor does it provide the recreative or popular form of instruction as hitherto pursued. Its aim is not the dissemination of knowledge or undigested learning, but the development of powers of thought and discernment. There are no examinations. The Volkshochscule offers education for its own sake." A department for adult education has been created at the Prussian Ministry of Education, and advisory committees have been formed at the Universities and Technische Hochschulen to act as a link with the academic world. Among the smaller States the Government of Württemberg has shown particular sympathy with the movement. The rapid spread of the Volkshochschule, attendance at which is not confined to manual workers, is a welcome sign not only of mental curiosity but of a determination to develop the spiritual capacities of the common man.

While the Volkshochschule is merely a local embodiment of the demand for adult education which is spreading all over the world, the Jugendbewegung is an exclusively German phenomenon, and every student of the inner life of post-war Germany should acquaint

himself with its history and its aims.[1] "The Youth Movement," wrote Professor Förster, its best interpreter, in 1923, "is the snowdrop on the hard German winter snow. It announces the German spring. It is a real consolation for every German who was ready to doubt whether the German soul would ever escape from the enchantment in which its pursuit of Power seemed to have inextricably involved it. That, in the midst of anger and hatred, misery and despair, this German flower could bloom is not only a glad hope for those to whom true Germanism is their spiritual home, but for other countries which feared that the de-Germanised German had come to stay. Away from the sins of the Fathers! Away from the pedagogy of tutelage, coercion, and police! That has always been my message, and the struggle for self-responsibility is the fulfilment of my dream. Authority, discipline, order, obedience, reverence are needed; but they produce their ripest fruits when individuality and conscience are fully respected. The Jugendbewegung is a moral rejuvenescence of the German people, the return of the German soul to its best traditions."

The movement which thus stirred the eloquent idealist to enthusiasm is the flowering of a seed planted as long ago as 1896, when Karl Fischer gathered round him a number of scholars attending a Gymnasium at Steglitz, a suburb of Berlin, who felt the need of a larger freedom. In 1904 Fischer founded the Wandervogel and formed a council of parents to aid him in his task. The young men escaped from the stuffy atmosphere of the classroom and the city, enjoyed the healing influences of nature, made acquaintance with the peasants, sang Volkslieder, and learned folk-dances. The habit of country rambles, not only for a few hours but for days, or even weeks, spread rapidly, and

[1] The best book is by Förster, *Jugendbewegung, Jugendseele, Jugendziel.* For brief accounts, see *Handbuch der Politik*, iv. ch. 31 (by Professor Rein); and Meyrick Booth, *Hibbert Journal*, April 1924.

within a few years it was a common experience to see groups of students tramping through the countryside, singing, dancing, and camping-out. Beginning as an experiment in recreation, the movement gradually developed a philosophy of life, which was consciously or subconsciously adopted by a growing number of young men in the upper classes of secondary schools and in the universities—a philosophy which reacted against materialism, commercialism, mechanism, artificiality, and the idols of power, pleasure, and wealth. A memorable gathering in 1913 of two thousand students on the Hohe Meissner, near Cassel, representing the Wandervogel and other juvenile associations, celebrated the centenary of the battle of Leipzig, constituted the Freideutsche Jugend, and proclaimed its faith in the spiritual liberty of the individual, as the Wartburg festival a century before had proclaimed its faith in the political liberty of the nation. "The Freideutsche Jugend will determine its life on its own initiative, its own responsibility, with inner sincerity. We shall turn our back on ugly conventions and the moral inertia of the established order. For this inner freedom we stand under all circumstances." The gathering had no political or religious labels; but its members were bound together by the ideals of a pure and wholesome life, and by a resolute belief in the right and duty of self-determination. How completely they had escaped from the traditional atmosphere of German student life was illustrated by their abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and their substitution of open air recreation for the enervating enchantments of the Bierstube.

At a moment when the Jugendbewegung was beginning to formulate its creed, its progress was rudely interrupted by the war. In 1915 a journal, *Die freideutsche Jugend*, was founded to keep in touch with the members in the field, and in 1917 a Jugendtag on the Lorelei was attended by a large number of young soldiers on leave. In so far as the movement had

possessed a political creed, it was opposed to the strident nationalism of the Imperial regime; and though its members offered their lives as readily as the followers of other faiths, many of them retained the ideals of human brotherhood and peaceful co-operation with other nations, and gave them poignant expression in their letters from the front. The Revolution, however, drove a wedge into the Freideutsche Jugend, and the nationalist section founded the Jungdeutsche Bund. The story of the Jugendbewegung, indeed, as might be expected from a movement inspired by a sentiment rather than a programme, is one of continual differentiation.

The Youth Movement at its best, purified and deepened by the experiences of the great struggle, is a quickening of the spirit, a rebirth of the German soul from the ashes of pagan Imperialism. It aims not at any concrete result, but at the expression of personality, the assertion of human worth, the realisation of spiritual freedom, the return to the simple life. It is, above all, a protest of the younger against the older generation, and indeed against the industrialised civilisation which threatens to smother the individual under technique, organisation, regimentation. It seeks its models in old Germany, when life was simpler, and before the creative impulses of the citizen were overlaid by the idolatry of the State. It restores the element of idealism and universalism, the lack of which created a spiritual void round the frowning bastions of the German Empire. Though it seeks to renew contact with the past, it is not reactionary, for it pays homage to the spirit, not to the forms of an earlier age. It is in some measure a revolt of the heart against the head, of the German against the Prussian, of the romantic, intimate, mystical South against the rationalistic, military, mechanical North.

The weaknesses and dangers of the Jugendbewegung are obvious to friend and foe. Though the general standard of personal purity has been raised, the un-

bridled comradeship of the sexes favoured by certain sections may give rise to occasional abuse. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the movement has proved as beneficial to girls as to young men. Other critics complain that there is too little respect for authority and too little interest in religion. Again the abstract anti-intellectualism, which has earned for it the title of "applied Bergsonism," involves a certain looseness of texture inimical both to cohesion and longevity. Such experiments tend naturally to disintegration, and it seems probable that association with particular parties and churches will be the destiny of the majority of its recruits. On the threshold of manhood it may seem possible to dwell apart; but the time soon comes when temperament or circumstance dictates co-operation with political or religious groups working towards some definite goal.

The value and vitality of the movement, which has found its most characteristic expression in the undifferentiated ranks of the Freie Jugendbewegung, are proved by the variety of moulds in which the glowing metal has been shaped. There is a distinctively Protestant association, of which active groups are to be found at the universities; but it has taken deeper root in the Catholic Church, which, by its independence of the State, its hostility to the Prussian tradition, and its continuity with the life of the richly coloured past, offers a more fruitful soil for the seed than its stiff-jointed Lutheran rival. Minority Churches are usually the most ready to seize opportunity, and the Catholic Church in Germany warmly welcomed the ferment of youth. Though not the first in the field, the Catholic association quickly passed its rivals in the race of numbers. The members are graded into groups, each with a name of its own. "Quickborn," for instance, arose from a Temperance society in Neisse, and contains boys and girls at the higher schools. "Grossquickborn" is a fellowship of Quickborners who enter industrial life, while "Hochland" is for those who

enter the university, and "Jungborn" caters for working-class youth. Each local group of the various organisations possesses or aspires to possess a home, even if it is only a disused mill or a ruined castle. The headquarters of Quickborn are at Burg Rotenfels on the Main, where the summer gatherings are held and where the president resides. The Church naturally believes that the problems which the youth of the twentieth century is out to solve can only be solved on Catholic lines; but many young Catholics seem to have rediscovered instead of merely accepting Christianity. "The new Germany," writes the journal *Quickborn*, "must be made by the young: the old cannot make it. Catholicism is rejuvenescence, eternal youth."

At the other end of the scale is the Socialist Jugendbewegung, inaugurated in the opening years of the century as a branch of the party, with the *Arbeiterjugend* as its organ and with Ebert as chairman of the Central Committee. On the eve of war over a hundred thousand members were enrolled. On the return of peace the numbers of the parent body were diminished by the split between the Majority and the Independents, who founded a rival organisation, "Die Freie Sozialistische Jugend." While the Socialist associations are mainly concerned with internal politics, the "Supernational Proletarian Youth" and Professor Leonard Nelson's "International Union of Youth" emphasise the need of wider political conceptions in the new world created by the war. Though a propagandist element is to be found in every branch of the Jugendbewegung connected with a particular party or church, all of them embody in some degree the passion for autonomy and self-realisation, to which the movement owes its birth. At the height of its appeal in the first years of peace it is believed to have numbered over half a million members; and if enthusiasm is now slowly ebbing, traces of its influence will continue to be felt for many years.

The younger generation in a time of transition is always the object both of interested and disinterested solicitude ; but with the exception of the Nationalists, whose horizon is bounded by the circumference of the *ancien régime*, there is remarkable unanimity in the advice that it receives. It must look less to its rulers and more within itself ; it must think less of purely material values and more of spiritual attainment ; it must be more rationally independent and less mechanically obedient. It was a sound instinct on the part of Hermann Hesse, the novelist, to bring Zarathustra back to the light of day, and to recall the better elements of the Nietzschean message.[1] "You are the most pious of peoples," cries the sage to the young men who crowd around him in the market-place ; "but what gods has your piety created ! The Kaiser and his drill-sergeants ! Learn to seek God in yourselves. Don't hang your heads ! Don't whine for a man. The Fatherland will not perish if you will only consent to grow up. You Germans are the most obedient of peoples. You have obeyed so easily, so joyfully. You never cared to take a step forward without the satisfaction that you were thereby fulfilling a command. Your country was covered with tables of the law and of prohibitions. How will this people obey when it once more hears voices of men instead of "most gracious commands" ? Do not ask, What shall we do ? Listen to the voice within you. If it is dumb, know you are on the wrong track. But if your bird sings, follow its note—to the uttermost solitude or the darkest fate."

[1] *Zarathustras Wiederkehr : Ein Wort an die deutsche Jugend*, 1920.

CHAPTER XV

THE GERMAN MIND

THE German mind was far too active to absorb itself in politics and economics, even at a time when the fate of the Fatherland was at stake and when the devaluation of the mark made the supply of daily bread the most pressing of problems for every citizen. Indeed, the very magnitude of the crisis turned many minds to the deeper problems of ethics, religion, and the philosophy of history.[1] The war contributed as little in Germany as elsewhere to the revival of dogmatic belief, and Disestablishment made the new Republic as secular if not as secularist as its sister in France. Catholicism, being unconnected with the Imperial regime, was unshaken by its fall; but the Protestant Church, thrown suddenly on its own resources, had no great reserve of popularity on which to draw. All State contributions for ecclesiastical purposes, except for the Theological Faculties, came to an end, and withdrawal from membership, once a difficult process, was greatly facilitated. The plight of the Church, which differed in the Federal units, was worst where Socialist majorities suddenly stopped the subsidies without leaving time to make fresh arrangements. The expectation of heavy levies thinned the ranks; but the faithful gradually elaborated new constitutions in the various States, and linked themselves together in the "German Evangelical Church League." The hostility of urban Labour has ceased with the fall of the Church from its high estate; but there is no sign of it recovering its influence over the working-classes, or, indeed, of doing more than maintaining its hold over the countryside and a section of the bourgeoisie.

Though official religion plays a smaller part in the individual life, the interest in the things of the spirit has waxed, not waned. Freed from the incubus of

[1] For a brief survey, see Professor Weinel, "Religious Life in Germany," *Hibbert Journal*, January 1924.

institutionalism and the fetters of dogma, Christianity makes a stronger appeal of service and love, and the disinterested labours of the Quakers have produced a profound impression. In his unconventional volume, *Christ and Human Life*, Förster argues that present-day humanity cannot be saved by politics and economics, pleads earnestly for what in England would be called Christian Socialism, and presents Christ as the Saviour not only of the individual soul, but of the world. In Marburg, the Protestant university *par excellence*, Martin Rade continues to teach his pupils the liberal doctrines familiar to readers of his journal *Die Christliche Welt*. At his side stands Heiler, a distinguished Modernist recruit, whose striking volumes on Catholicism analyse the strength and weakness of the Church which he reluctantly left.[1] His classical treatise on *Prayer*, published in 1918, is the outstanding achievement in recent Protestant theology, and the popularity of a work which combines philosophic argument with mystical piety suggests the existence of a public which has not lost all interest in the unseen world. Even more eloquent of the demand for spiritual nutriment is the success of the treatise *Das Heilige* (The Holy), by Rudolph Otto, the third member of the Marburg triumvirate, published in 1917, and now in its twelfth edition.[2] Though standing outside the frontiers of dogma, the Professor exposes the insufficiency of pure intellectualism, and emphasises the significance of the instincts and intuitions, which he holds to be more fundamental. Though his debt to the schools of Bergson and James is obvious, he is no irrationalist. His aim is the harmonisation of reason and intuition, his message that awe is the beginning of religion.

The appeal of undogmatic religion may be further illustrated by the persistence of the influence of Eucken. For a generation before the war the veteran Professor

[1] Heiler's book is discussed by Dean Inge in the *Quarterly Review*, 1923.

[2] An English translation appeared in 1924.

had proclaimed from his chair at Jena a gospel of ethical and philosophical idealism in which increasing numbers of students and readers all over the world found guidance and repose. Though neither creative nor profound, he strove manfully to counterwork the gospel of Haeckel, the most distinguished of his university colleagues. "We reject all attempts to derive spiritual life from the mere world of existence," he wrote. "We see in man not only a natural, but a supernatural being." Though Eucken supported the war, he never joined in the pæans to the incomparable perfection of the German soul, and the confusion which followed its close stirred him to redouble his evangelising activities. "The main reason for the mournful plight of Germany at the present time," he wrote, "is the neglect of the inner forces of life, the indifference to the soul, the externality of outlook which pervades all strata of society. In face of this we need a firm faith. The old-time Christians liked to call themselves God's warriors. We, too, must feel that we are warriors fighting for the spiritual world and for the things of God." To rebuild ethics and philosophy on an idealist basis and to foster religious life, the Eucken Society, which now counts over fifty branches, was founded, with *The Eucken Review* as its organ.

A far greater figure in the religious world of Protestant Germany was Tröltsch, who died in 1923 at the age of fifty-seven. A disciple of Ritschl, like most of his contemporaries in the higher fields of theology, he spent his early years as a Lutheran pastor, exchanging the pulpit for the chair at the age of twenty-nine. His twenty years at Heidelberg witnessed the publication of his masterpiece, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, and of a number of smaller works which arrested attention on account of their blending of philosophy, theology, and history. While Harnack remains unapproached in the clarity and fidelity with which he interprets the thoughts of other men, Tröltsch was himself a thinker of the first

rank ; and though his difficult style limits the number of his readers, he ranks with Max Weber and Georg Simmel among the most original German minds at the opening of the twentieth century. The death of all three within a year or two of one another impoverished the higher life of the world.

The appointment of Tröltsch to succeed Pfleiderer at Berlin in 1915 increased the interest in public affairs which had taken him before the war into the Upper House of Baden. In the last year of the war he supported the efforts for a compromise peace and the campaign against the Vaterlandspartei, and as a convinced democrat he welcomed the downfall of the old regime.[1] "Militarism is ended," he wrote in a remarkable article on 16th November 1918— "that is, the construction of the State and Society on the Prussian military system and the spirit which corresponds to it. German militarism did not consist in a powerful army or a penchant for Imperialism, which were common to other States. It was rather a political institution, the deciding element in the Constitution, since it formed the essence of the ruling society. The German Constitution was a dualism, for behind the civil government, consisting of the Reichstag, the Bundesrath, and the Ministers, stood the military power of the King of Prussia and the General Staff. The system was rendered tolerable by general well-being and a model bureaucracy ; but it had no roots in the people, and it was broken to pieces by defeat." When the old regime perished in the Revolution he entered the Prussian Landtag and served for a short time as Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Education.

Despite his active interest in current affairs, Tröltsch's main concern was with religion and the philosophy of history. His matured beliefs were explained in a series of lectures written for delivery

[1] *Spektator Briefe*, a selection from his political articles, with an illuminating preface by Meinecke, appeared in 1923.

in England in 1923, the year of his death.[1] In a survey of Christianity among World-Religions, he announces that he has become "more and more radical and super-denominational, while at the same time I have come more and more to regard the specific kernel of religion as a unique and independent source of power." While remaining a Theist to the end, he attached ever less significance to tradition, to dogma, and to the necessity of Churches, and ever more importance to the religious experience of the individual soul. As a Relativist and Pragmatist he regards Christianity as a historical phenomenon, not as a final revelation of truth. "It stands or falls with European civilisation, having entirely lost its oriental character and become hellenised and westernised. Its primary claim to validity is the fact that only through it have we become what we are, and that only in it can we preserve the religious forces that we need. We cannot live without a religion, and the only religion we can endure is Christianity. It could not be the religion of such a highly developed racial group if it did not possess a mighty spiritual power and truth, if it were not, in some degree, a manifestation of the Divine Life itself. Our inner experience is the criterion of its validity, but only of its validity for us. It is the way in which, being what we are, we receive and react to the revelation of God. The various racial groups can only seek to purify and enrich their experience, each within its own province."

In the last year of his life Tröltsch published the first volume of his second great treatise, *Der Historismus*, an untranslatable noun which may be rendered "The Historical Standpoint." Its theme is the relation of historical facts to the standards of value set by the development of political, social, ethical, æsthetic, and scientific ideas. Here again we find the dominance of the author's Relativism. "In each

[1] Translated, with a valuable Introduction by Baron von Hügel, under the title of *Christian Thought*.

province there are the same difficulties. Even in regard to the validity of science and logic we see great differences under different skies. What is really common to mankind and universally valid, despite a general kinship and a capacity for mutual understanding, seems to be exceedingly little, and appears to belong more to the province of material goods than to the ideal values of civilisation." He approaches his task not merely as an academic exercise but as a contribution to the ordering of the individual and national life. What he describes as "the crisis of historical thinking" arises in the theoretical not in the technical field, which is well cultivated. The larger part of this massive and difficult volume is devoted to a profound and erudite analysis of a long series of philosophies of history from Hegel, Comte, and Marx to Dilthey, Simmel, and Spengler; and the author's own synthesis was deferred to a second volume which he unfortunately did not live to complete.

In the realm of pure philosophy Kant remains the dominating influence, and the celebration of the bi-centenary of his birth in 1924 was an impressive tribute to his sway.[1] Neither Bergsonism nor the New Realism has struck root in Germany, where Neo-Kantians of different hues monopolise the chairs. Windelband and Natorp have passed away, but the apostolic succession is continued by Vaihinger, the veteran founder of the *Kant-Studien*, by Rickert, Scheler, Cassirer, and Husserl. Next to Kant none of the immortals inspires such sustained interest as Leibnitz, whose complete works are at last to be edited by the Berlin Academy, his own creation, which has paid such a compliment to Kant alone among philosophers. A further illustration of the sway of idealism is found in the growing recognition of the greatness of Dilthey, a complete collection of whose writings has recently appeared.

While the message of philosophy is delivered to

[1] See *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*.

initiates, three distinguished thinkers caught the ear of the larger public which craves for the philosophic handling of fundamental problems in a dialect which it can understand. Keyserling, Steiner, and Spengler belong to that class of amateurs which is so much larger in England than in Germany, where men of learning are expected to hold university chairs. All three wrote the larger part of the works which brought them fame before the *débâcle* created a demand, not only for political reconstruction, but for spiritual guidance. Keyserling pointed the way from the clashing crudities of the material world to the kingdom of the soul ; Steiner revived the claims of mysticism as an organ of spiritual vision ; and Spengler explained the lengthening shadows falling over the civilisation of the West.

Count Keyserling, a member of a distinguished German family long settled in Esthonia, had published a treatise on *Immortality* and other philosophical writings before he started on the journey which supplied him with the theme of his greatest work. The first volume of the *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* was written between 1911 and 1914, and was in the hands of the printer when war broke out.[1] The second volume was also virtually completed, but the author employed his leisure during the conflict in rewriting the later portions. The complete work appeared in 1919, and sold in tens of thousands. Its character was announced by the aphorism on the title-page, " The shortest way to oneself is a voyage round the world." The preface, written in June 1914, explained that it was to be read as a novel or a poem ; that the concrete was never an end in itself, but only a means of expression ; and that many of the descriptions in its pages owed more to imagination than to observation.

" Europe beckons no longer," begins the diarist. " It is too familiar to provide my soul with new experiences, and it represents only a single facet of the human

[1] An English translation has recently appeared.

spirit. I wish to let fresh influences play upon me and to watch their effect. I shall thus rise above the accidents of time and place. If anything can lead me to myself it will be a journey round the world." He politely but firmly declines the offer of a specialist to accompany him on his wanderings through India. "It would destroy the whole purpose of my journey. What are facts as such to me?" Striking the East at Ceylon, he lands in Southern India, pushes his way north, enjoys the conversation of Mrs. Besant and Tagore, and revels in the atmosphere of the holy city of Benares. Though he passes on through Burma, and lingers in China and Japan, India stands in the foreground of his picture as the authentic expression of the immemorial East.

To such a mind, more interested in the shadowy depths of the human soul than in the material achievements of the modern mind, it is something of a shock to land on American soil; but the fascination of the East never blinds the diarist to the virile qualities of the West. "The essence of Western civilisation is that it recognises nothing to be unchangeable. We deem ourselves able to make fundamental changes in the world. This spirit of pugnacity, courage, optimism is foreign to the East, which forms a more modest estimate of human power. I now recognise that the practical superiority of Christianity is the expression of a metaphysical asset: it embodies, as does no other religion, the spirit of freedom. We hear the call to action. We are the hands of God." Christian civilisation, however, is not seen at its best in the United States. "Chicago is terrible. Life exhausts itself in machinery. The tool is master of the man. Americanism impoverishes the individual, and expresses its values in quantitative terms." In the outward organisation of life, he concludes, America is supreme; but there is a deeper gulf between material progress and spiritual perfection than in Europe. If Asia is too old, America is too young.

The closing pages of the diary, written at the height of the conflict, record the return of the traveller to his Esthonian home. " I am nearer to the realisation of myself. Outside rages the World War. Not only do they try to destroy each other, but through the mouths of their spokesmen they heap calumnies on one another like the heroes of Homer. All harmony, all understanding, is banished. The unity of mankind seems to be at an end. Yet for myself it continues to exist. In this catastrophe I see merely a crisis, which, instead of cutting the thread of development, accelerates its pace. The whole world has made me what I am." His readers will agree that his journey has not been in vain ; for it has confirmed his belief in the supremacy of the soul, and deepened his conviction of the unity of the human race.

The *Travel Diary* was hailed as a lay bible, and its message was enthusiastically welcomed at a time when the best minds of the nation had become aware of the insufficiency of the materialism bequeathed by Imperial Germany. It was the work of a thinker, a scholar, and an artist, who suddenly found himself exalted by his admirers to the position of a prophet and a priest. His philosophy was implied rather than stated, but his message was plain enough. The ideal man was to be created by blending the inwardness of Asia with the vigour of Christian Europe. The new world must be built by new citizens. A booklet entitled *The Way of Perfection* demanded a Platonic Academy or training centre ; and the wide response led to the creation of a " Society for a free Philosophy," and to the foundation of a School of Wisdom at Darmstadt, for which the ex-Grand Duke of Hesse provided a home where an *élite* could be trained and the annual conference could be held. The emphasis on seclusion, meditation, contemplation, revealed the disciple of the East, while the stress on personality embodied the bracing traditions of the West. " The road to which I point men," he declared, " leads towards earth, not towards heaven."

The intensive cultivation of the soul by spiritual exercises was a preparation for the service of man.

The high priest of the School of Wisdom elaborated his message in *Der Leuchter*, the organ of the movement, and in a series of booklets. In *What we Need and What I am Seeking*, he breaks a lance with Spengler. Western civilisation, he declares, is not irrevocably doomed to perish ; but it can be saved by wisdom alone, not by knowledge. In passages inspired by the teaching of Goethe he proclaims the ideal of " being," rather than of " being able to do." He seeks to produce the *Vollmensch*, the complete personality, the sage rather than the saint or the scholar. It is the same doctrine of idealistic individualism which greets us in the Jugendbewegung. Though his message is addressed to the world, Keyserling believes that the soil of his own country is best suited for its reception, since Germany at the present time is most conscious of the imperfection of the prevailing mentality and most anxious for liberation from its yoke. The School of Wisdom has provoked the mirth of mocking critics, and its chief has been accused of pontifical airs. Yet whatever deductions be made for human weakness, there can be little doubt that his influence ranks high among the factors that have gone to the making of the German mind after the war.

A rival to Keyserling is found in Rudolph Steiner, an Austrian by birth, Director of the Waldorf School at Stuttgart and founder of the Anthroposophical Society, which has its headquarters at the School of Spiritual Science at Dornach in Switzerland, and branches in many parts of Europe and America.[1] Anthroposophy is announced as " a living token of the fact that humanity is ripe for a renewed knowledge of the spiritual worlds. It is a science based not only on the observation of man's senses and his intellectual thought, but also on the higher faculties of knowledge kindled in him by spiritual training and true initiation.

[1] See G. Kaufmann, *The Fruits of Anthroposophy*.

The Anthroposophical Society seeks to establish the spiritual life of the individual and the community on the basis of a true understanding of spiritual and physical evolution." The latter is encouraged by eurhythmy, or the art of movement, the former by the spiritual practices of the East. Steiner's training in natural science bore fruit in his edition of Goethe's scientific works, and his interest in the development of mind inspired a long list of writings on the Theory of Knowledge, the Philosophy of Freedom, Goethe's Æsthetics, Nietzsche, and the German Mystics. On reaching middle age he busied himself with theosophy, occultism, and the mysteries of the ancient world; but he was less interested in attempting to fathom the Deity than in developing the spiritual nature of man. In his book, *How to attain Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, he explains that vision of the world beyond could be reached by the Yoga method of meditation, concentration, and clairvoyance. Though it bears a different name, his system is closely related to theosophy, and his occultism, which seemed to open paths to psychic and spiritual development, made forcible appeal to a generation in search of healing and comfort. The Anthroposophical Society was founded in 1912, the Goetheanum was begun in 1913 at Dornach, and in the first years of peace the influence of Steiner was at its height.

After winning authority as a doctor of the soul, Steiner attempted to cure the sickness of society in his work *The Threefold Commonwealth*, published in 1919, which has enjoyed an enormous circulation and has been translated into many languages.[1] In this short but ambitious work he analyses the three basic forces in society, the economic, the political, and the spiritual, and discusses the problems of capital and labour, education, and international relations. In the realm of constructive sociology he is only a clever amateur, and his philosophical writings may strike

[1] English translations appeared in 1919 and 1923.

some readers as cloudy and verbose ; but he is taken very seriously by his disciples, and his fame is a further illustration of the deeper interest in the life of the soul which characterises a considerable section of the German public at the present time.

Of far greater intellectual significance than the writings of Keyserling and Steiner is Spengler's massive treatise, *The Decline of Western Civilisation* (*Der Untergang der Abendlandes*), the most important and influential work published in Germany during the last decade. Like Keyserling, he held no academic post, and except for his Doctor's thesis on Heraclitus he published nothing before the appearance of his masterpiece at the age of thirty-eight. If mathematics and philosophy were his favourite subjects, he also read widely in history and literature, religion and art. The Agadir crisis of 1911 turned his attention to current issues, and his first instinct was to write on some political phenomena of the age and the conclusions to which they pointed. "I then discovered not only that I must go much further back in order to understand the present, but that a political problem cannot be understood on the purely political plane, and, indeed, that no fragment of history could be understood till we penetrate the secret of world-history, which no one had ever achieved. Then all the connections began to become clear, and I envisaged the approaching war as the type of a historical occurrence which had its predetermined place within a great historical framework. At last I saw the solution plainly before me in immense outlines and in all its logical necessity. My book contains the irrefutable formulation of an idea which cannot be contested. Its narrower theme is an analysis of the decline of the culture of the West ; but the goal is nothing less than the problem of civilisation." The title of his treatise was chosen in 1912 ; the first draft was finished before the outbreak of war ; and the first volume, revised and enlarged, appeared in 1918, with the subtitle

Outlines of a Morphology of World-History. The preface, dated from his Munich home in December 1917, describes the work both as a philosophy of history and as a commentary on a great epoch. "I close with the expression of a wish that this book should stand not altogether unworthily beside the military achievements of Germany." Thus the work, far from being the offspring of defeat and despair, was planned at the meridian of the Empire and completed when Germany still counted confidently on victory.

"In this book," begins Spengler, "the attempt is made for the first time to determine history in advance, to follow up the fate of the civilisation of Western Europe in the stages through which it has still to pass." There is a logic of history, and its principle is periodicity. The biological analogy between the life of mankind and the life of the individual, on which rests the Hegelian philosophy of history, is far too simple, and is indeed contradicted by our knowledge of its course. The key to the historic process is to be found in multiple periodicity, a succession not of stages but of completed cycles. The unity of mankind, though a biological fact, has no historical existence. Civilisation passes through the stages from childhood to old age not once alone, but again and again. One civilisation after another moves onward to its appointed end. Western civilisation is the latest but not the last of the recurring cycles which advance and recede like the tide on a shelving beach. The philosophy of history, in a word, is the fulfilment of an immanent destiny.

The decline of the West, like the decline of the ancient world, is a phenomenon limited in time and place; but to understand its causes we must know the whole record of the past. The common classification of Ancient, Mediæval, and Modern is too European, and substitutes barren chronological sequence for fruitful sociological interpretation. Though statesmen have begun to think in continents, philosophers and historians have not yet learned the necessity of broad

perspectives. Spengler exhibits to us four cycles of civilisation, the Indian, the Antique, the Arabian, and the Western. The first begins about 1800 B.C.; the second about 900 B.C.; the third embraces the foundation of Christianity and Islam; the fourth commences about A.D. 900. Each is subdivided into Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, and each is studied in its religion, philosophy, art, science, and other manifestations of its historic life. The seasonal and cultural analogies between the four cycles are presented in elaborate tables. Spring represents the intuitive, the impersonal, the creative, illustrated by the Vedas, Homer, and Christianity. Summer reflects ripening consciousness, embodied in religious reformations, the birth of philosophy, science, and criticism. Autumn is the zenith of reason, while winter denotes the displacement of spiritual activities by practical aims. A second table exhibits the parallelisms in art, a third in politics. The detailed analogies are usually suggestive, though at times far-fetched; but the main argument is unaffected by the suspicion that some of the bricks in the imposing structure are a little out of place. Successive civilisations, according to Spengler, work to a time-table, and the civilisation of the West, now entering the winter months, has only a couple of centuries to run.

The Decline of the West, though written before the *débâcle*, is the typical book of post-war Germany, as Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* was the typical book of the Empire at its height. Had Germany won the war, its merits would have secured it the attention of scholars, but hardly the plaudits of the public. The title, which would have sounded like a paradox to a victorious people, harmonised with the apocalyptic mood which accompanied military defeat, political upheaval, and physical privation. The soul of the West, the soul of Faust, as Spengler describes it, the soul of aspiration which awoke in the Middle Ages, was ceasing to create, and was passing

through quiescence towards extinction. The strength and erudition of the book must strike every reader, and its bold generalisations stimulate reflection even if they do not always convince. An immense literature of criticism and interpretation greeted its appearance, and historians, philosophers, and theologians felt compelled to explain their attitude to "Spenglerism."[1] Some critics, like Croce, argued that its thesis was neither new nor true; but the obvious power of the work deserved at any rate the larger part of the attention which it received.

A second stout volume, published in 1922, with the subtitle *World-historic Perspectives*, analysed the life of early man, the State, and other problems of historical sociology; and a little book on *Prussianism and Socialism*, published in 1920, contained a political confession of faith. Addressing himself to the young men who, by energy, self-discipline, and brain, are called to lead the next generation, Spengler declares that Socialism must be rescued from the clutches of Marx, and that "the real instinctive Socialism" is simply an expression of the old Prussian spirit. "In the heart of the people the Weimar Constitution is already doomed. Its completion was received with utter indifference. They thought that Parliamentarism was on the up grade, whereas even in England it is going downhill. This episode is assured of the profound contempt of posterity. In the Paulskirche sat honourable fools and doctrinaires: at Weimar we felt the pull of interests. We know what is at stake, not for Germany alone but for all civilisation—shall trade rule the State? In relation to this issue Prussianism and Socialism are the same thing. We had never seen it, but now it is clear. They must present a common front against the philosophy which sterilises the inner life of our people, and their union means not only the fulfilment of the Hohenzollern idea but the salvation of the worker. They will be saved

[1] See Schröter, *Der Streit um Spengler*.

together or perish together. As a separate movement of the proletariat Socialism has had its day; as a system it is beginning. The Conservatives must equally cast away selfish aims, and choose between conscious Socialism and annihilation."

Spengler concludes with a revised edition of the Nietzschean gospel. "Let no one hold back who is born to rule. I appeal to the young. Become men! We want no more ideologues, no talk of cosmopolitanism and the spiritual mission of Germany. We need hardness and socialist supermen. Socialism means *Macht, Macht,* and again *Macht.* Plans and thoughts are nothing without *Macht.* And the way to reach it is clear—the combination of the *élite* of the workers with the best representatives of the old Prussian feeling for the State, both resolved on democratisation in the Prussian sense, both linked by a common sentiment of duty and the consciousness of a great task." In spite, however, of all the manly virtues of Prussianism, the evening shadows are lengthening over the West. The future belongs to "Russianism"—a type from which Spengler shrinks back with something like horror. However great the spiritual, intellectual, political, and economic differences between English, Germans, French, and Americans, they form a unit when confronted with Russianism. The true Russian is as foreign to us as a Roman of the time of the Kings or as a Chinaman before Confucius.

Though it is not surprising that Spengler was regarded as a pessimist, he refused to accept the label without qualification. In his tract entitled *Pessimismus?*, published in 1921, he complains of "the almost universal misunderstanding" of his book. Part of it he attributed to the title. "Some people confound the decline of the ancient world with the sinking of an ocean liner. If we speak of fulfilment (*Vollendung*), the pessimism disappears." The idea of fate dominates the scene. "When in 1911, under the impression of Agadir, I discovered my 'pessimism,

an unimaginative optimism lay heavy on the world. To-day I would choose another formula to attack the equally unimaginative pessimism. I am the last person to dispose of history in a phrase. On the other hand, as regards what is called the goal of mankind, I am indeed a pessimist. I see no progress, no goal. I see no spirit, and even less a unity of striving, feeling, and understanding in this mere concourse of human beings. I only see aim within the history of a given cycle. And here, too, the tasks are historical, not ethical. That is only pessimism to the man who regards history as a highroad on which humanity trots along, always in the same direction. I am no pessimist. Pessimism means seeing no more tasks to fulfil, whereas I see so many that I fear there will not be enough time or men to perform them. A Roman hardness is beginning, and soon there will be room for nothing else. We shall not make another Goethe, but we may yet make a Cæsar." The final message is that we should face our fate like men and play a losing game to the last round.

While Spengler and his critics were attempting to explain the morphology of history, the professional historians were content to record it. Though the passionate emotions of the war and the currency crisis which followed it were in the highest degree unfavourable to scholarship, valuable work has been produced, and the University of Berlin maintains an easy lead. The veteran Wilamowitz found comfort during the struggle in a comprehensive study of Plato as a man and a thinker, " hoping to make others love him as I love him." Eduard Meyer, turning from the continuation of *The History of Antiquity* on which he was about to embark, wrote an authoritative monograph on the closing years of the Roman Republic, sharply challenging Mommsen's view of the character and achievement both of Pompey and Cæsar, and followed it up by a daring excursion into the maze of New Testament criticism. Harnack has kept his

masterpieces up to date without adding to their number. Erman, unhasting and unresting, continues to explore the civilisation of Egypt. Delbrück has finished the *History of the Art of War*, which has been the main task of his academic life. Meinecke has traced the development of the doctrine of *raison d'état* from Machiavelli to Treitschke. Otto Seeck, of Münster, has completed his panoramic survey, *The Decline of the Ancient World*, which carries us from Constantine to the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. The Leipzig scholar, Erich Brandenburg, has retold the story of the foundation of the German Empire; and his colleague, Karl Hauck, brought his monumental narrative of German Church History down to the fifteenth century before his death in 1918. At Heidelberg, Max Weber devoted his last years to the study of the sociology of the great religions of the world. In Freiburg, Michael has issued a new instalment of his large-scale picture of England under Walpole, and Rachfahl of his vast biography of William the Silent. Davidsohn makes steady progress with the first critical history of Florence. The collapse of the Empire has stimulated interest in the Frankfurt Parliament and the work of Bismarck and his successors; and the publication of the secrets of the Foreign Office from 1871 to 1914, in a long series of stately volumes admirably edited by Thimme, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and Lepsius, has supplied students all over the world with the raw material for innumerable monographs. No recent achievement of the German brain, however, compares in importance with Einstein's gradual elaboration of the theory of relativity, which has found increasing if not indeed universal acceptance.

Passing from scholarship to literature, we may note in the first place an enhanced devotion to the immortals. Never has the greatest of German writers been so securely enthroned in the hearts of his countrymen, not only as poet, but as thinker and teacher. In

1916, at the height of the struggle, Professor Gundolf, of Heidelberg, published a massive volume on Goethe, which has won a popularity only less than that of Bielschowsky's biography, and on the return of peace an impressionist study from the pen of Emil Ludwig found a wide circle of readers. Next to Goethe, no figure in the literary pantheon excites more interest than Hölderlin, whose exquisite art, both in verse and prose, is at last estimated at its true value, and on whose hopeless love the publication of the letters of Diotima (Frau Gontard) in 1921 have thrown fresh light.

The supremacy of Gerhart Hauptmann in the world of letters is as uncontested to-day as that of Strauss in the world of music, and in 1922 his sixtieth birthday was celebrated as a national festival.[1] Yet even his warmest admirers reluctantly admit that the writings of the last decade are inferior to those of his prime. *The White Saviour*, a dramatic epic on Cortez and Montezuma, is the best of them, and *Indipohdi* contains some fine passages. He still retains his faculty of surprising his readers, and his novelette, *The Heretic of Soana*, describing the temptations of an Italian priest, is a curious study in the style of Renaissance paganism.[1] The attempts of Sudermann, his old rival on the German stage, to repeat the successes of his middle life have been no more successful ; but his *Autobiography*, a vivid record of the long struggles which preceded recognition, has won him sympathy and respect. Neither of the two celebrated dramatists has attempted to deal with the new political and economic problems which confront the coming race. In the realm of poetry the death of Dehmel in 1920 left a void which has not been filled.

The war, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, produced no literature of enduring worth ; but the revolution has left its mark both on the novel and

[1] For recent literature, see Hewett-Thayer, *The Modern German Novel*; and Witkop, *Deutsche Dichtung*.

the drama. Clara Viebig's *The Red Flood* (*Das rote Meer*), a sequel to *The Daughters of Hecuba* in the same pathetic world of the Berlin bourgeoisie, covers the closing months of the struggle and ends with the unlamented fall of the Imperial regime. The same period is analysed by Bernhard Kellermann in *The Ninth of November* (*Der neunte November*), which contrasts the self-indulgent life of the upper strata of Berlin society with the privations of the struggling masses. A vivid picture of the closing scenes on the Western front, as reflected in the Kaiser's impressionable mind, was painted by Karl Rosner in his novel, *The King* (*Der König*).[1] Scarcely less actual in its choice of topics, and far more tendentious in treatment, was the trilogy of Walther von Molo, *The Awakening of the People* (*Das Volk wacht auf*). The author had won fame on the eve of the war by a full-length study, in the form of a novel, of the career of Schiller. Having found his *métier*, he published *Fridericus*, a snapshot of the Seven Years' War; *Luise*, a picture of the heroic queen; and *The People Awakes*, a study of the closing days of the Napoleonic occupation. The later stories of Thomas Mann, Jakob Wassermann, and Hermann Hesse have maintained or increased the popularity which they won before the war; but the German mind of to-day is reflected rather in the drama than in poetry or the novel.

A new *genre* has been created to embody the surging emotions of the new era. "Expressionism," writes Herman Scheffauer, its skilful interpreter, "is direct action in art.[2] It is instinctive, intuitional, esoteric; felt, not defined; an impulse, a medium, a new visualisation of the outward world. The unutterable wishes to take shape, but overflows. Impressionism is acted on by the world. Expressionism acts on the world from within. It is the conveyance of thought or emotion directly, without forms, sounds, words. The

[1] Translated, with a preface by Lord Haldane.

[2] *The New Vision in the German Arts*, ch. I.

expressionist shuts out the world, and projects his idea, his feeling, his memory of the visible. Art is production, not reproduction. Truth is resemblance not to nature but to the artist's inner world. It breaks down the barriers of language. Expressionism becomes explosionism. The dialogue proceeds by discharges and concussions." Such experiments and extravagances, like Futurism in art, are for the young, and contemporary German drama is in the main the story of three young men.

Ernst Toller, the youngest and most celebrated of the triumvirate, born in 1893, was provided with themes by the war and the Revolution at the most impressionable time of life. His first play, *Wandlung* (Transformation), strikes the note of passionate revolt which inspires all his dramatic work. War Death (in a helmet) and Civilian Death (in a top hat) meet on a field of graves to do business, and the former summons his victims and parades them. The play ends with the demolition of a statue to " Our Victorious Nation," on which the hero (the author) has been at work, and with his exhortation to the multitude to join hands and destroy the Bastilles of body and spirit, though not by methods of terror. At the Revolution Toller became Chairman of the Bavarian Central Council of Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Councils, and member of the Bavarian National Council ; and when the short-lived Soviet regime was established in Munich he commanded its ragged regiment of defenders, while taking no part in the savagery by which it was disgraced. He was condemned to five years' imprisonment in a fortress, where he wrote his touching poem on a pair of swallows which nested in his cell,[1] and the grim play which was to carry his name all over the world.

Masse Mensch (*The Mass Man*, or *Man in the Mass*) was mapped out in the first autumn of his imprisonment and completed in the following year. The figures, as is customary in expressionist drama, are

[1] *Das Schwalbenbuch* (*The Swallow Book*) was translated in 1924.

mere types — an officer, a priest, a banker; but in *Masse Mensch*, as in Goethe's *Natürliche Tochter*, the heroine possesses a name. Sonia, a Russian, joins the workers and falls a sacrifice to their cause, while her husband remains faithful to his post. The Mass Man is represented by "The Nameless One," while the proletariat, with their grimy faces and hoarse voices, form the sombre setting of the piece. The author's theme is the struggle of the mass against its fetters — no longer the political tyranny of rulers against which Schiller's heroes thundered, but the relentless grip of modern capital. The story opens in a tavern where the men are concocting a revolt, and Sonia, despite the appeal of her husband, adopts their cause. The second scene, a dream of Sonia, reveals a Stock Exchange crowded with men in top hats and frock-coats. A clerk calls out the bids for shares in the Flamethrower Trust, the Poison-Gas Concern, and similar inventions of the devil. In the third scene a meeting of workers resolves on force, to the cry of "Mass is Power! Mass is Right!" The fourth, a second dream of Sonia, pictures Humanity's prison in which shadowy figures rattle their chains. The fifth brings the Revolution with barricades, shots, and shouts, after which Sonia is led off by the soldiers. The sixth, a third dream-picture, shows Sonia in a vast cage, past which flit headless shadows of the victims of the Revolution. The final scene takes place in a prison-cell, where the husband recalls his warning against the Mass; but the painful debate is cut short by the arrival of an officer with the sentence of death. Though Sonia has sided with the rebels, she realises the mistake of violence. "No man may kill for any cause. God was Moloch, the State was Moloch, the Mass was Moloch." "And who or what is holy?" asks the Nameless One. "Some day," replies Sonia, "the free folk united in the common task." A moment later a volley rings out in the prison-yard. We feel the vibration of the play as we read it in cold print,

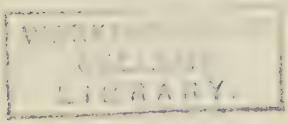
and on the stage it has moved audiences in England and elsewhere to loud applause. *The Machine-Stormers*, also written in prison, depicts the Luddite riots at Nottingham in 1816. When we have supped full of horrors, a simple old man, bending over the dead body of the Luddite leader, proclaims the humane Toller gospel : " We must all help one another and be kind."

Next to Toller's masterpiece in popularity stands *Gas*, the best known of the many dramas of Georg Kaiser,[1] and itself the second part of a trilogy representing the life of three generations of a family. The two plays are alike in their expressionist technique, their surging crowds, their anonymous protagonists, their sombre picture of industrial slavery, their inarticulate yearning for a happier world. Gas is chosen as the symbol of blind and pitiless forces, harnessed not to the service of man, but to the profit of the few. The conflict of ideals between husband and wife in *Masse Mensch* is paralleled by the antagonism of the Napoleonic billionaire and his unselfish son. Mechanical science, like a new Frankenstein, has become the terror of its inventors, and the play ends with a shattering explosion. Such throbbing tragedies breathe the atmosphere of suffering and groping in which the German people lived after the *débâcle*, and in which it might well seem that the only factor which had come unscathed through the fiery ordeal was the capitalist system.

More sympathetic than Kaiser and more polished than Toller, the writings of Fritz von Unruh occupy a high place in recent literature. The son of a Prussian general and himself for some years an officer, Unruh soon exchanged the sword for the pen, and in 1911 published *Louis Ferdinand, Prinz von Preussen*, a study of the brave and brilliant prince to whom all eyes turned in 1805, and who perished gloriously in 1806. Resuming his commission in 1914 he was

[1] Performed by the Birmingham Repertory Company, November 1923.

appalled by the horrors of war, and after the rush on Paris he wrote *Vor der Entscheidung* (*Before the Decision*), a dramatic poem in thirteen scenes. "Three months in the field," remarks the Uhlan Officer, who is none other than the author himself. A soldier enters who has lost his reason, followed by a youthful volunteer bringing in the bodies of some German soldiers shot by the inhabitants of a neighbouring village. According to rule the village must be burned, and its inhabitants punished. The Uhlan, whose hideous task it is to inflict the customary vengeance, enters the Mayor's house, where he finds the young wife in travail. Her father, husband, and brother are led away as ringleaders and shot, while the woman dies of physical and mental agony before his eyes. The heart of the officer, to whom the unity of mankind is more than a phrase, is filled with loathing for the material and spiritual ravages of war. While he lies on the ground to rest and reflect the sun comes out, and prompts him to his simple confession of faith: "Down with the lying gods! Let the sun shine again!" No less poignant is the one-act tragedy, *Ein Geschlecht*, written during 1915 and 1916, in which the scene is laid in a cemetery on the edge of the battlefield. The brutalising effects of the conflict are mirrored in the members of a single family, and the despairing mother in passionate tones summons all mothers and all women to a war against war.



CHAPTER XVI

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

A GREAT revolution requires decades if not generations to produce its full effect on the life of a nation, and the student of the new Germany can do little more at present than speculate on the permanence of the changes which it has wrought.[1] No one would dare to maintain that finality has been reached, either in the political or economic sphere. Interested and disinterested champions of the old order and the new tilt at one another in the tournament, and the battle sways this way or that as the barometer rises or falls. The soul of the nation is assailed and distracted by a complex of hopes and fears, ambitions and memories, humiliations and sacrifices. Political and social cataclysms, like military victory and defeat, do not alter national character, but they revise the scale of values, readjust the angle of vision, and involve a redistribution of power. Will Germany remain a Republic? Will she content herself with the ideals of peace? Will she recover her place among the governing nations in the world? To these questions we can give no very confident reply, for her future depends not on the sentiments of her people alone, but also on the treatment she receives from her neighbours and the world at large.

If the Tree of Liberty planted by the Revolution is to drive its roots firmly into the soil, it must be secured against the resurgence of dynastic autocracy. During the second half of the war the figure of the Kaiser was dwarfed by the military chiefs, and his flight to Holland convinced the warmest champions of the Imperial idea that he was made of common clay.[2] The success of the

[1] For the topics discussed in this chapter the following books are suggestive: *Handbuch Der Politik*, vols. 4 and 5; J. H. Morgan, *The Present Situation in Germany*; Kessler, *Germany and Europe*; Lichtenberger, *L'Allemagne d'Aujourdhui*; Kraus, *Germany in Transition*; Bülow, *Der Versailler Völkerbund*; E. Schultze, *Not und Verschwendung*; Gumbel, *Vier Jahre Politischer Mord*.

[2] For a recent and typical verdict on William II, see Theodor Wolff, *Das Vorspiel*, vol. 1, ch. i.

ill-advised attempt of the Allies to obtain his extradition and to place him in the dock might have done something to regild his faded laurels ; but the stout refusal of the Dutch Government, coupled with the promise to supervise his activities, condemned him to the dull routine of the life of a country gentleman in a strange land. Moreover, the two occasions on which he has recalled attention to himself were little calculated to restore his prestige. His marriage to a Princess of Reuss, not very long after the death of the ex-Empress, whose virtues commanded universal respect, was widely regarded as lacking both in dignity and piety. If the marriage could be defended on private grounds, the publication of his *Memoirs* in 1922 furnished irrefutable evidence of his unfitness to rule. Looking back over his reign, he surveys a crowded stage of which he occupies the centre, wise, provident, pacific, the father of his people, a constitutional ruler. Mistakes were due to his advisers, and they were made in defiance of his warnings. Neither Bülow nor Bethmann-Hollweg escapes the rod, while Tirpitz, the most disastrous influence in his life, alone receives the blessing of his fallen master. The censorious self-righteousness of the book strikes even the casual reader, but its disingenuousness can only be realised by the expert. When, for instance, he declares that he was opposed to the Kruger telegram, he conceals the fact that he favoured a far more dangerous course. If illusions still lingered as to the fitness of the last of the Hohenzollerns for his exalted post, they have been dissipated by the photographic realism of the diary of Count Zedlitz during his twelve years at the Kaiser's Court.

No one desires the restoration of William II, even were Germany's victors to allow it ; but the Crown Prince is not without his champions. His volumes of autobiography are less clumsy than the effort of his father, and the privations of Wieringen aroused a sympathy denied to the opulence of Doorn. Neither his political record nor his personal character, it is true,

was suggestive of wisdom or self-control; but he was not among the Die-Hards in the closing stages of the struggle, and he is wholly free from the posturing Byzantinism of the *ancien régime*. Though the bourgeoisie accepts the Republic as by law established, it has not lost its preference for a throne. The restoration of personal rule is desired by the Extreme Right alone; but a Constitutional Monarchy on the English model would secure the suffrages of a large majority of the Prussian middle class. The permission accorded to the Crown Prince in 1923 to live in Germany as a private citizen was interpreted in some quarters as a measure of humanity, in others as a move in the political game. If he holds aloof from reactionary intrigues, he may live down the memory of his youth and strengthen his claim to occupy the throne of his fathers.

A Hohenzollern Empire is unlikely to reappear, but a constitutional King of Prussia is by no means an impossibility. For the upper classes look down on a Republic as the Boulevard St. Germain looks down on the Elysée, and the bourgeoisie associate monarchy with stabilised prosperity. The tribulations through which Germany has recently passed have done more to advance the royalist cause than the clev erest propaganda, and the raising of the royalist flag by the National Liberals at the election of December 1924 is a symptom of the general movement towards the Right. No one could forecast the result of a plebiscite on the elevation of the Crown Prince or his eldest son to the Prussian throne. The Democrats are weak, the Centrum is divided, and the Socialists alone offer determined resistance to the monarchical cause. Indeed, had the Kaiser transferred his sceptre to his grandson at the beginning of October 1918 Germany might have become and remained a Parliamentary Monarchy. Professor Förster's contention that Germany owed more to the Grimms than to Bismarck finds little response, and the appeal of Professor Kantorovich to his country-

men to escape from "Bismarck's shadow" provokes the reply in many quarters that it is precisely such a master-builder of whom the nation stands in need.[1]

Monarchical sentiment in the various units of the Reich is in inverse ratio to the number of Socialists and Communists which they contain. Of the larger communities of the Centre and South, Saxony alone stands to the Left of Prussia. The most industrialised State in Germany remains the most radical. In Prussia the urban proletariat is in large measure balanced by the heavy battalions of the Junkers, the small farmers, the professional classes, and the great industrialists. In Saxony, on the other hand, the factory worker is supreme, and Communism competes with Socialism for his allegiance. The ex-King has no enemies; but he is too colourless to inspire a royalist movement and too unambitious to desire an exchange of the tranquil pleasures of country life for the feverish atmosphere of his capital. At the other end of the scale is Bavaria, a land of Catholic peasants, with an industrial fringe in the north. A plebiscite held at any moment since the murder of Eisner would have carried Prince Rupprecht to the throne by an overwhelming majority. The Wittelsbachs are older than the Hohenzollerns, and their prestige is less tarnished by defeat. The Prince is a travelled and scholarly man, a competent soldier, and a moderate Conservative. Nowhere have the vicissitudes of the Revolution left such a deep furrow as in Munich, and in none of the State capitals would the return of the Court command a warmer welcome. In Württemberg, on the contrary, the royalist cause is handicapped by the fact that King William II left no children, and that Duke Albrecht, the heir, is a Catholic. If Baden and Hesse were free to choose, they might decide to restore their dynasties, to which the Socialists were never opposed and to which the bourgeoisie were warmly attached. When in 1921

[1] See Förster, *Bismarck's Werk*, 1921; and Kantorovich, *Bismarck's Schatten*, 1921.

the government of Hesse ordered the removal of the portrait of the Grand Duke from the Aula of Giessen University, the students declined to use the room till it was restored. Since the South German States have been in large measure self-governing for a century, the rulers would be required to make a smaller sacrifice of pride and power than the Hohenzollerns, who governed as well as reigned. Dynastic autocracy is dead, but dynastic sentiment survives in the background, if not in the foreground, of consciousness.

That the dynasties are unforgotten in South Germany is due not to conservatism alone but to the particularism which survived the rise of the Empire and has outlived its fall. In reluctantly accepting the centripetal features of the Weimar Constitution, Bavaria had more privileges to forgo than any other member of the Reich, and she has never ceased to resent their loss. She feels that she counts for less in the new Germany, and that the loss of her throne is among the causes of her diminished prestige. Moreover, the traditional dislike of Catholic Bavaria for Protestant Prussia has been intensified by recent experience.[1] The clerical and conservative Bavarian regards the North as the home of Jews, atheism, and revolution. Yet he never dreams of severing connection with the Reich, even were such a severance possible. The ideal of Bavaria is the recovery of her throne and her autonomy. She aims at the revision of the Constitution, not at the destruction of the Reich. From this deep-rooted antagonism between North and South, vigorously fostered by a French Minister at Munich, arose serious differences between the Bavarian Government and Berlin, culminating in the audacious revolt of Hitler and Ludendorff in 1923.

In the smaller South German States particularism is emotional rather than political; and the return of the dynasties is desired not as a means of exacting a larger

[1] See the essays *Der Preusse* and *Der Bayer* in Harden, *Köpfe*, vol. 4.

share of autonomy but as a symbol of the historic life of the community. The particularism of the Rhineland, on which interested hopes were built in France in the first year of peace and again during the occupation of the Ruhr, had no roots in the soil, and will disappear with the foreign agencies to which it owes its birth. However the democratisation of Germany is endangered by the survival or revival of dynastic sentiment, the unity of the Reich stands firm against internal and external foes. Though the superstructure of the Bismarckian edifice has been overthrown, the foundations have weathered the storm. Particularism stands to-day for diversity, not disruption ; for unity in variety, not for national suicide.

Next to the eviction of the dynasties, the most notable change in the political landscape is the disappearance of the army. Since Scharnhorst and Boyen created " a people in arms," and still more since North and South buried the hatchet on the battlefields of France, the army had been the chief symbol of national vitality and power, and its authority had grown with its victories. Her soldiers were to Germany all that her sailors were to England—the foundation and bulwark of her strength ; but they also meant far more. In the hierarchy of professions the claims of the officers' corps to the first place were unchallenged. Their privileged position at Court reflected and confirmed the prestige which they enjoyed in society. And now the halo had vanished, and the people was no longer " drunk with victory." German arms had been defeated. Compulsory service was abolished. The Reichswehr was limited to 100,000 men. The officers' corps melted away, some into agriculture, others into business, others again into politics or penury. The uniform had disappeared. Germany had become a nation of civilians.

A third transformation, less outwardly spectacular but hardly less significant, was the decline in the fortunes of the bourgeoisie. The Junkers retained their land, their organisations, their self-confidence,

and their *esprit de corps*. The Socialists are supported by the knowledge of their numerical strength, and by their belief in the value and permanence of political institutions which they helped to create. The middle classes, on the other hand, are like sheep without a shepherd. The system under which they had flourished and with which they were content burst like a bubble before their eyes. Their savings disappeared with the collapse of the mark, their annuities and pensions melted away. Hundreds of thousands of educated men and women, too old, too feeble, or too untrained to earn their living, were faced with the spectre of slow starvation, which they endeavoured to keep at bay by the sale of jewellery, furniture, books, and any other possessions which could be turned into cash. Their plight aroused the sympathy of compassionate hearts all over the world, and the Quakers, the Save the Children Fund, and other relief agencies supplemented the public and private assistance within the Fatherland. The *nouveaux riches*, according to their kind, had little to spare for their needy fellow-countrymen, and the blatant self-indulgence of the German profiteer at the very moment that harrowing appeals were circulating abroad aroused universal indignation and disgust ; yet it is a mistake to imagine that the nation passed by on the other side while good Samaritans from the outer world fed the hungry and clothed the naked. The relief from abroad, precious though it was in itself and in the message of human fellowship that it brought, never amounted to more than a tiny fraction of the sum provided at home. The Civil Service, enjoying at any rate assured employment, escaped the worst experiences of the professional classes ; but the shrinking of a salary which was never large and the rise in the cost of living have darkened the life of all but the highest branches of the bureaucracy.

The question is often raised whether the character of the German people has deteriorated under the fourfold shock of war, military defeat, political revolution,

and economic catastrophe. The brutalising effects of the great struggle are obvious in Germany, as elsewhere ; but it is the prolonged economic crisis, the sudden loss and rapid gain of wealth, which has been the main factor of such moral disintegration as has occurred. Speculation on the exchanges, reckless self-indulgence, evasion of the taxes, corruption of officials—such are the natural concomitants of an era of feverish struggle, in which tradition has lost its authority and the sentiment of social solidarity is weakened if not destroyed. Even graver symptoms of national decline have been registered in the increase of crimes of violence, in the terrifying epidemic of political assassinations, in petty thefts, and in lowered standards of personal morality among the young. It is too early to judge how deeply the rot has eaten into the oak ; but with the gradual return to normal economic conditions and reviving prosperity consequent on the stabilisation of the mark, the old German virtues of discipline, industry, honesty, and thrift are regaining their place in public and private life. Much will depend on the women, whose political enfranchisement symbolises an advance in their social status as well as an increase in their national responsibilities.

Of all the props and pillars of the *ancien régime*, one alone has survived in almost undiminished strength. Eastelbia remains in the hands of the Junkers. Though they can no longer send their sons into the army or dominate the Landtag through the three-class system, they retain their estates and their unchallenged authority throughout the countryside. Moreover, their economic position, at least for a time, was improved by the Revolution. Inflation enabled them to pay off crippling mortgages, and the profits on the high price of food—sold clandestinely to *Schleichhändler* as well as in the open market—were invested in farm buildings, agricultural machinery, and motor cars. While the townsman was fighting a desperate battle with cold and hunger, the Junker household was well-fed,

well-warmed, and well-clad. Moreover, though adult suffrage and the ballot-box have diminished his political power, the Junkers are well represented in the Reichstag and the Landtag, and the officers of the Reichswehr are mainly drawn from their ranks. It is on the large estates that the monarchical and military tradition retains its hold, and it is in rural Prussia that the enemies of republican democracy concoct their schemes for its overthrow. Throughout wide stretches of territory events since November 1918 are regarded as a mere humiliating interlude, to be followed, as Jena was followed, by a glorious resurrection. The Prussian Junkers, like the Hungarian Magnates, have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. If another Kapp Putsch is launched against the Government or against a foreign foe, it will have been organised with their aid and supplied with arms hidden on their estates.

The cause of reaction has been strengthened by the conviction, not confined to life-long monarchists, that parliamentary self-government requires a background of historical experience which Germany does not possess. The change, it is argued, has been too sudden and too complete ; nations must learn to govern themselves as children learn to walk. Moreover, with the exception of the Socialists, the average German has shown no great desire for political responsibility, convinced as he is that governing, like other arts and crafts, is best performed by professionals. Liberals of the school of Naumann, with a passionate belief in the educative virtues of democracy, are rare.[1] The test of a constitution is to be found, not in its conformity to ideal standards or foreign models, but in its capacity to secure the services of the ablest of its citizens and to produce stable and efficient government. "Two things the German people will never understand and never long endure," observed Ludendorff to an English

[1] Thomas Mann is an exception ; for his *Von deutscher Republik*, published in 1922, reveals more democratic faith than his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, written during the war.

officer, "Parliamentary Government and Voluntary Service."

The testimony of the Die-Hard General is naturally suspect, but his view is widely shared by men who detest his politics. "The student of political forms," writes Professor Dibelius at the close of his well-known work *England*, published in 1923, "envies England her Constitution; but its merits cannot be exported by a stroke of the pen. Instead of the vital, energetic English Parliamentarism we have bred a sham variety, in which only the salaried secretaries of the parties can rejoice. The English kind stirs the people to its depths. The German imitation drags to the ballot-box every year or two a people with only a fitful interest in politics, and compels the elector to vote for a list of unknown names. The English brings outstanding men to the Treasury bench, while the names of German Ministers are usually known to the party officials alone. In England a dictator is at the helm, in Germany the chief of a coalition who cannot move a step without the Right or the Left wing beginning to rebel. The English Parliamentarism breeds political leaders, the German political adventurers. The English Premier achieves creative work: the German Chancellor keeps the horses of his chariot in step. English Parliamentarism is original and vital, because it has grown by organic development from English characteristics: the German is a manufactured import, which the mass of the people regards with something like indifference." "The fate of a people," echoes Spengler in his latest work,[1] "depends not on laws and constitutions, ideals and programmes, not even on moral principles or racial instincts, but, above all, on the capacities of the ruling minority. The art of rule is not the chief but the only problem of politics. Our Parliamentarism is a caricature. By our whole past, our race, and our geographical position we are a monarchical people, whether the ruler be Kaiser or Chancellor, just as the English are born

[1] *Neubau des deutschen Reichs*, 1924.

republicans, even though they adorn their social edifice with a monarchical spire. The Parliamentary age is irrevocably ended. A people has only one right—to be well governed, and since the mass cannot undertake the task, it must be performed by individuals. The supreme need is the strengthening of the governing power with high responsibility."

The triple task of Germany after the war was to modernise her internal structure, to heal the sores of the struggle, and to regain her position among the Great Powers. The first of these tasks has been accomplished. The second is in process of accomplishment. What progress has been achieved in the third ?

The international position of a State depends not only on its resources but on the character which it bears in the eyes of the world. Germany was frequently informed by her victors that she would be readmitted into the comity of nations if she confessed her sins and fulfilled her obligations. The German people, however, were in no mood for the " repentance " demanded by the Allies. They were well aware of the faults and failures of the Imperial regime ; but that had been swept away. They admitted the errors of the Imperial diplomacy ; but its bungling agents had been removed. New men controlled a new machine. The breach with the past was as complete as President Wilson could desire or expect. There was one demand, however, which could not be fulfilled. They could not admit for themselves and their allies the undivided responsibility for the catastrophe. The forced confession of guilt rankled in their breasts. Among the earliest decisions of the Government which emerged from the Revolution was to commission Kautsky to publish the documents relating to the outbreak of the war ; and the " Kautsky documents " were followed by a far more ambitious undertaking—nothing less than the revelation of the secrets of the Foreign Office from the foundation of the Empire to the murders at Sarajevo. A final verdict on the responsibility for the war, it was argued, would

only be possible when all the evidence was available, and when the victorious Powers followed the example of the vanquished. In the light of the documentary revelations at home and abroad experts like Brandenburg, Montgelas, and Delbrück indignantly repudiate the accusation that the Central Powers were the sole or even the chief authors of the conflagration, and a monthly review, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, has been founded to discuss the significance of every scrap of evidence, old and new.

The gradual recognition by informed opinion all over the world that the responsibility for the war was divided, and that the struggle was disgraced by atrocities on both sides, destroys the illusion that either the German or any other nation is afflicted with a double dose of original sin and is so far outside the pale of civilisation that it must be treated as a pariah in the human family. After a struggle so bitter and so prolonged the restoration of confidence between the antagonists is a work of many years ; but the healing influences of time are beginning to tell. The victory of the Left in the French elections of May 1924 reversed the engines which were driving Europe towards a fresh catastrophe, and the smooth inauguration of the Dawes scheme was an object-lesson in the value of settlement by consent. It was hoped by the friends of peace in all countries that the elections of December 1924 would confirm Dr. Marx in power and accelerate the process of reconciliation which had been advocated, in foul as well as fair weather, by Georg Bernhard in the *Vossische Zeitung*.

The forecast proved too sanguine. Though the Fascists and Communists lost ground, the Nationalists maintained their strength, and the National Liberals broke up the coalition of the middle parties by insisting that the Nationalists should at last assume their share of official responsibility. The continuance of Dr. Stresemann at the Foreign Office in the Luther Cabinet, despite his steady championship of the Dawes scheme,

failed to allay the suspicion that his Nationalist colleagues might after all checkmate the policy of fulfilment ; and the open championship of the monarchist cause by the National Liberals during the election introduced a new and alarming factor into the international situation. The long interregnum between the resignation of Dr. Marx and the appointment of his successor gave ominous significance to the warning of Count Westarp that the Luther Ministry would be the last experiment in Parliamentary Government. Moreover, the evolution of party politics towards the Right synchronised with an unsatisfactory report of the Military Control Commission, which in turn led to the postponement of the evacuation of the northern zone of the Rhineland, conditionally due by the terms of the Treaty on 10th January 1925. The revival of political tension was reflected in the slow progress of the negotiations for a Franco-German commercial treaty, and the sky was still further clouded by a stern speech from M. Herriot at the end of January 1925. Once again the gulf yawns between the ancient antagonists.

When the fumes of the General Election of November 1918 had been worked off, Great Britain gradually emerged as the quarter from which friendly advances were most likely to be made. It was from England that the first influential protests against the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles were heard, and the growing divergence of the British and French paths in various parts of the world enabled Englishmen to survey the problems of European reconstruction with increasing detachment. The revival of Germany was desired both for selfish and unselfish reasons, and the growing community of business interest reinforced the gentler tone which synchronised with our condemnation of the advance into the Ruhr. The death of Lord Northcliffe in 1922, leading to the adoption by the *Times* of a less unfriendly attitude, was hailed as an event of European significance. And finally the accession to

office of a Labour Government, headed by a leading opponent of the war of 1914, suggested that the passions of the struggle were rapidly cooling, and that the German Republic could count on the courteous treatment which the dignity of a Great Power has the right to demand. The return of a Conservative Government to power in November 1924, on the other hand, diminished the confidence of Berlin in the goodwill of Downing Street, and the retention of British troops in Cologne suggested that Great Britain might once more become the tool or accomplice of French ambitions in the Rhineland.

Turning her eyes to the West in the opening months of 1925 Germany could espy no friend on the horizon, and if she directed her glance towards the East there was but little to encourage her hopes. The instinctive antagonism of the Teuton and the Slav is maintained and intensified by the spectacle of an independent Danzig, of the severance of East Prussia by the hated corridor, and of the Polish districts of Upper Silesia. There is no finality in the eastern frontiers of the Reich. Moreover, the knowledge that secret military conventions exist between France on the one hand and Belgium, Poland, and Czecho-Slovakia on the other, fosters apprehensions of *Einkreisung* in a new form all the more alarming since every member of the group possesses more troops than Germany. The Reich, indeed, stands alone in Europe, for the *rapprochement* with Russia which was expected to follow the Treaty of Rapallo has been prevented or at any rate postponed by the German distaste for Bolshevism and by resentment of Bolshevist propaganda. Friendly relations with Italy were quickly restored at the end of the war ; but the peninsula is too far away to play an important part in the hopes or fears of Berlin, and the vigorous denunciations of French policy in the writings of Nitti, himself an exile from his own land, can provide little more than Platonic satisfaction.

It could hardly be expected that the League of

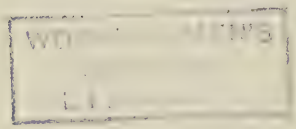
Nations would appear in the light of a harbour of refuge to the storm-tossed bark at any rate during the first period of its existence, for its origin and activities suggested to German eyes open hostility or a scarcely less wounding indifference. It was embedded in the hated Treaty of Versailles ; its doors were originally closed to the Powers which had suffered defeat ; it was tarred with the partition of Upper Silesia ; it had betrayed its trust in the Saar ; it averted its eyes from the Ruhr. When Germany, in the revulsion of feeling which followed the *débâcle*, had wished to come in, the Allies, at the dictation of France, refused her admission. The golden opportunity was lost of bringing her into the League with the assent of the majority of her people, and for the next few years public opinion was too incensed for the Government to apply, even had it desired to do so. As the passions of the struggle began to cool it became clear to all who paid more than lip-service to the League that the entry of Germany was essential to its task, and in the summer of 1922 the British Government publicly expressed a wish that she would apply for membership. The veto of France, however, remained, and the occupation of the Ruhr increased the determination of the German people to hold aloof from an organisation in large measure dominated by their inveterate foe. The *détente* following the substitution of M. Herriot for M. Poincaré and the signing of the London Agreement changed the situation, and reinforced the arguments that had long been employed by the German League of Nations Union under the presidency of Count Bernstorff. During the sessions of the Assembly at Geneva in September 1924, the Marx Cabinet announced the desire of Germany to enter the League, on condition that she, like other Great Powers, should have a permanent seat on the Council and should, in view of her limited armaments, be dispensed from the duties of joint coercion imposed by Article 16 of the Covenant. The first condition was accepted by the members of the Council ; but negotia-

tions on the second were not completed when the warm wind which had been blowing since the French elections suddenly veered and left Germany shivering in moral and material isolation.

Self-preservation is the first instinct of nations as of individuals, and after the shattering experiences of recent years one of the strongest racial stocks in the world is beginning to pull itself together. Every German reminds himself that the downfall at Jena was followed by the Wars of Liberation. "It is this unity amid difference, this resurgence of a new national consciousness," wrote Brigadier-General Morgan at the opening of 1924, "which is the most abiding impression left upon my mind after all these years in Germany. When I see—as I have seen a hundred times—bands of students marching in columns of four with their sticks at the slope, I do not, like certain alarmists, see the cadre of a regiment nor the embryo of an Army Corps. It is not what I see but what I do not see that alarms me. It is not the things that are seen but the things that are not seen which govern human destiny. And of those things the soul of a nation is one. When I see a great nation animated like one man with a common feeling that it has been greatly wronged, then, indeed, I see a nation that may yet take captivity captive and, bursting the fetters which bind it, sweep all before it in the assertion of its right to live. Germany sees herself purged of her sins by her sorrows. The mood of arrogance is passing or has passed. The sense of guilt, never perhaps very strong, has given place to a sense of wrong. She has forgotten the early years of the war, with their lust of annexations, and only remembers the last of them with its fight for existence."

A rare opportunity for securing the peace of the world was lost when the victorious Allies preferred a vindictive to a moderate settlement, and critics have not been wanting who argue that the "Carthaginian peace" doomed the young Republic which was forced to accept it to an early death. The battle of democracy at any

rate is not yet won, and the destiny of the Republic depends far more on the attitude of its neighbours than on the theoretical principles of its citizens. If the new Germany obtains reasonable consideration at the hands of the victorious Powers, it may survive and take root in the national consciousness. If it fails to secure the ordinary amenities of life for the mass of the people, if it is crushed by political and economic servitudes, if it comes to be generally identified with humiliation and suffering, it will assuredly be overthrown. New institutions must derive from success the prestige which older structures inherit from the past. Self-government has never formed part of the religion of the German people. The thrones were overturned by the sword of the enemy and the arrows of President Wilson. If they are re-erected, it will be because the nation is convinced by bitter experience that a tame Parliamentary Republic is incompatible with the strength and prosperity of the realm. Thus the future of Germany is inextricably linked to the fortunes of Europe; and the fate of victors and vanquished alike will depend on the capacity of rulers and people to perceive and pursue the abiding interests of our common civilisation.



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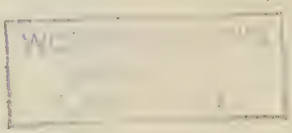

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